BAPTISM AND CHRISTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

ROGERS

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BAPTISM AND CHRISTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

BY

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APUD TE EST FONS VITAE

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PREFACE

The study of which the following pages are the result was first suggested to me by a conversation with a friend who had joined the Baptist community because, having gone into the question, he had come to the conclusion that the original method of administering the Sacrament was by submersion. I did not believe that he was right in his judgement, but was conscious that I had little definite with which to oppose his conviction. I knew that baptism by affusion was represented in the catacombs, but I had no idea of the mass of evidence from archaeology that witnessed to it as the universal practice in early ages. I began my study in the belief that it was at least allowed at times; I ended it with the conviction that no other method was adopted till the general introduction of infant baptism in the early middle ages made submersion possible.

What I have written has therefore an obvious doctrinal and practical interest, but I have endeavoured to keep out all controversial matter and to treat the question simply as one of archaeology. For the same reason literature has been appealed to mainly in so far as it bears upon the study of Christian antiquities, and to show how it corroborates the witness of contemporary material evidence.

I have to thank many friends for help and suggestions. Particularly I am grateful to the Rev. Darwell Stone, Principal of Dorchester College, without whose encouragement I should not have carried through the work. My thanks are also specially due to Prof. Bulić, Director of the Imperial museum at Spalato, who has sent me information about the

baptistery at Salona; to Dr. Wieland of Dillingen and the Rev. Père Delattre, Supérieur des Pères Blancs at S. Louis de Carthage, for many interesting details of baptisteries in Africa; to M. de la Croix for similar information from Poitiers; to Mr. O. M. Dalton for enabling me to photograph objects in the British Museum, and to Mr. A. W. Jose for his kind help in correcting the proofs.

11 Charterhouse Square,
April 4, 1903.

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BAPTISM AND CHRISTIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

CHAPTER I

THE AGES OF PERSECUTION

Scope of the inquiry undertaken.

It is the object of this essay to examine the evidence from archaeology as to the custom of the early Church, while only such references to literature will be made as may serve for the purpose of illustration. The first three chapters will deal with the positive side of the question, by considering the actual representations of the rite that have been preserved, while in the last two the negative evidence will be examined, by studying such fonts as have survived from early days, with a view to determine whether their structure was such as would admit of the submersion of a catechumen.

Direct evidence as to the custom of the Ante-Nicene Church is confined to the paintings of the catacombs of Rome. They are by far the most important witness that has survived, for they have been preserved where stuffs have perished, household articles broken, even inscriptions and marbles destroyed. They were hidden from public gaze; and so the expression of Christian sentiment and representation of Church custom could be freely painted, and moreover after the Lombard invasions of the seventh and eighth centuries, when the bodies of the saints were removed within the walls of the city, they became entirely neglected, so that their frescoes escaped the fate of so many ancient monuments that were destroyed in later building and restoration.

In representations of baptism there is sometimes a considerable difference of opinion as to whether that of Christ is

pictured or that of a catechumen. For our purpose it is a matter indifferent, for though the doctrinal significance of S. John's baptism was entirely distinct, there is no reason to suppose that it was conceived of as varying in method.

It is generally assumed that the usual custom of the early Church was to baptize by total immersion, and though the reasons for supposing that affusion may have been practised even by the Apostles have often been set out and may be found in any special treatise on the subject, it is generally taken for granted that it was only in exceptional cases that the latter method was adopted.

This assumption is based mainly on the evidence supplied by literature. No doubt the works which have survived to the present day represent what was best in the thought of the early Church and so most worth preserving, and we do well in giving them the first place in our consideration, since it is always more profitable to study what is typical of any age, even if the average stood at a lower level; but we must not forget that the writings of the Fathers, as giving the best work of the leaders of the Church, tend to depict the ideal in their minds rather than to chronicle the actual that lay before their eyes.

The average of Christian sense and practice is best discovered by studying the way it worked itself out in liturgies and in the recognized devotions of the people, but even the Church orders will reveal to us what was aimed at rather than what was attained. To find out what was actually done by the mass of Christians we must turn to the evidence of archaeology, for which the data are drawn so largely from cemeteries and other regions where the popular will has always had freest scope.

So, were a stranger to examine our customs to-day, he would find frequent allusions in sermons to the symbolism of baptism which would seem to assume the practice of total immersion; on turning to the Prayer Book he would suppose it to be the custom, and affusion to be permitted occasionally, but an examination of the fonts in our churches would prove submersion always impossible for adults and nearly for infants.

Ex. 1. *Fresco in the Crypt of Lucina.* c. 100 A.D.

The earliest representation is that painted over the door of one of the chambers of what was probably the original crypt of Lucina on the Appian way (Fig. 1). It now forms part of the catacomb of S. Callistus and dates from the first or early second century [1].

Fig. 1.

The scene is that of the baptism of Christ. The Baptist, clothed in an exomis, stands on the right; he stoops forward and holds out his right hand to a nude figure moving towards him as if to come out of the water. The dove flying towards the right is seen above the figure of the Saviour.

The fresco is ·61 m. high and ·4 broad. A copy was made by an artist named Dickmann under the supervision of Mgr. Wilpert in 1884; since that time it has considerably faded. The tongue of land on which the Baptist stands in the reproduction in De Rossi, as well as the water-line, do not appear in the original. Wilpert noticed that the traces of colour were more blue under the figure of the Baptist and of a greener shade beneath that of the Saviour. The olive branch indicated in the beak of the dove in De Rossi is emphasized in Garrucci, whose picture is that most frequently reproduced, but seems to have been inserted in his copy from some confusion with the left wing of the bird.

From the relative position of the figures the water could not have been pictured as rising higher than the knees of the

[1] *Römische Quartalschrift* (in future *R. Q. S.*), 1896, p. 335: 'Die Taufe Christi auf vorconstantinischen Gemälden der Katacomben,' von A. de Waal.—De Rossi, *Roma Sotterranea*, vol. i, p. 324, tav. 14, Rome, 1864.—Garrucci, P. R., *Storia dell' arte cristiana*, vol. i, p. 203; vol. ii, tav. i, Prato, 1873.—Schultze, V., *Archäologie der christlichen Kunst*, p. 365, München, 1895.

Saviour, as the Baptist seems to have been represented as standing on dry ground.

The painting has been explained as symbolical of deliverance from persecution (Garr., vol. i, p. 203) and as the saving of S. Peter (Martigny, *Dict.*[2] art. Pierre). V. Schultze interprets it as the baptism of a catechumen on the ground that our Lord would not have been represented naked in pre-Constantinian times. Against this opinion see Dr. J. Strzygowski, *Iconographie der Taufe Christi*, p. 3, München, 1885, and the fresco in the cemetery of SS. Petrus and Marcellinus described below.

Ex. 2. *Fresco in the Gallery of the Sacraments in S. Callistus. c.* 200.

The so-called gallery of the sacraments in the cemetery of S. Callistus dates from the second or early part of the third century. The sacrament of baptism is represented in the two oldest cubicula.

In the first, A^2, the baptizer stands on dry ground to the left of the picture (Fig. 2). He is clothed in a white toga, and his feet are bare. He lays his right hand on the head of the catechumen, and in his left holds an object generally considered to be a scroll.

Fig. 2.

The catechumen is represented as a boy, nude, holding his hands straight down and inclining a little to the left towards the baptizer. The water rises to the ankles.

The fresco is between two loculi; above the upper one is a shipwreck, and in the corresponding place on the wall to the left is Moses striking the rock and a man fishing in the water which flows from it[1].

[1] De Waal, *R. Q. S.* 1896, p. 344.—De Rossi, vol. ii, tav. 11 and 15, cc. 12 and 13.—Garr., vol. ii, tav. 5, 3.

Ex. 3. *Fresco in the Gallery of the Sacraments in S. Callistus. c.* 200.

In the other cubiculum, A^3, the baptizer stands on the right side with bare feet and a cloth round his loins (Fig. 3). The catechumen is again represented as a boy, nude, holding his hands down and slightly turning his face away. Both are standing in the water, and the baptizer is in the act of pouring water over his head. The falling water is represented by six large strokes of dark blue paint. The dove behind the right-hand figure flies towards the group.

Fig. 3.

Above is represented Jonah being cast out of the ship and swallowed by the whale, to the left is a man fishing, to the right a man carrying his bed, generally described as the paralytic (Mark ii. 12), but more probably intended for the sick man of Bethesda (John v. 9). The symbolism of the whole leaves no doubt that a scene of baptism is represented, while the absence of the dove in the first example suggests that it is perhaps a catechumen rather than our Saviour that we have before us [1].

In the reproduction in De Rossi the strokes indicating the water are too finely drawn, and the water-line is represented as passing behind the knees and leaving the baptizer's feet dry as well as those of the baptized down to the ankles, below which he shows the picture as destroyed. Garrucci and others copy him. The water should cover the ankles, allowing the feet to show through the water. The dove is omitted in De Rossi and Garr., but is given in the *R. Q. S.* The picture in the latter is

[1] De Waal, *R. Q. S.* 1896, p. 344.—De Rossi, vol. ii, tav. 13 and 16, cc. 12 and 13.—Garr., vol. ii, tav. 7, 2.

reproduced by photography from a painting and does not show the blue strokes of water.

Ex. 4. *Fresco in the Cemetery of SS. Petrus and Marcellinus. c.* 250.

Another representation occurs in the roof of cubiculum 54 in the cemetery of SS. Petrus and Marcellinus (Bosio's numbering), and dates from the middle of the third century (Fig. 4). The Baptist is represented on the left standing on dry ground with his left foot raised on a stone, leaning a little forward and laying his right hand on the head of Christ. He wears a cloak or skin reaching to the knees and leaving the right shoulder and arm free. The Saviour is represented as a nude boy, standing in the water, and His arms raised as in prayer. Above in the clouds is the dove flying downwards.

Fig. 4.

The dove, taken with the fact that the three corresponding scenes represent the Magi following the star, the Adoration, and (?) the Annunciation, leaves no doubt as to the subject and forms a link to Ex. 1 in the crypt of Lucina, where the baptism of Christ is represented, and Exx. 2 and 3 where the person baptized is a boy[1].

It is interesting to note that the newly baptized were commonly called *pueri* or *infantes* (cf. Le Blant, *Étude sur les sarcophages chrétiens antiques de la ville d'Arles*, p. 27). The custom of giving them a mixture of milk and honey mentioned by Tertullian (*De Cor.* 3, *Adv. Marc.* i, 14: 'Ille [Dominus] ... nec aquam reprobavit creatoris, qua suos abluit, nec oleum,

[1] Wilpert, J., *Ein Cyclus christologischer Gemälde aus der Katacombe der heiligen Petrus und Marcellinus*, Freiburg im B., 1891.

quo suos unguit, nec mellis et lactis societatem, qua suos infantat') is enjoined in the *Canons of Hippolytus*, ch. 19, § 144, as teaching them that they have become as little children, 'ut doceant eos qui communicant iterum se natos esse ut parvuli, quia parvuli communicant lac et mel.' In § 148 however the custom is regarded as a symbol of the future life in the promised land, the waters of baptism corresponding to those of the Jordan, and thus further emphasizing the similarity of the baptism of Christ as conceived in the popular imagination with the administration of the sacrament as men were accustomed to witness it. Later tradition declared that the stone on which the Baptist stood while pouring the water over our Saviour's head was preserved in the church on the banks of the Jordan at the traditional place of Christ's baptism, where it served as the prototype of the bishop's cancellarium usually found in early Christian baptisteries. (Garr., vol. i, p. 368, quoting Epiphanius.)[1]

Another example is mentioned by De Waal (*R. Q. S.* 1896, p. 346) as having been discovered by Wilpert in the cemetery of Domitilla but as not having been edited. No description is given, but it is attributed to the same period as the examples above.

Beyond these there are two pictures of doubtful significance, and two with possible but improbable reference to baptism.

Ex. 5. *Fresco in the Cemetery of Praetestatus. Second century.*

In the cemetery of Praetestatus there is a fresco, dating from the end of the second century, the meaning of which has been much disputed. It represents three beardless figures, clothed in tunic and toga but with bare feet (Fig. 5). That on the right stands with the head slightly turned to the left; the two figures on the left hold long cane-stalks with leaves in their hands; that in the hand of the central figure touches the head of the figure to the right, round whose head are short

[1] *Peregrinatio Silviae*, ed. Gamurrini, ch. 68, p. 98, who quotes Paulinus *Ep.* 21 *ad Sev.* and the *Itinerarium Burdigalense.*

strokes of paint. To the extreme right is a growing cane on the bend of which is a dove. Near the picture are painted the woman with the issue of blood and the woman of Samaria, giving no clue to the meaning of the scene.

This fresco is usually interpreted as the Passion of Christ, though mainly on the ground that the figures are clothed and so could not represent baptism 'by immersion.' Passion scenes are rare at so early a date, but baptism scenes it is true are hardly less so. The whole is in a peculiar style of painting

Fig. 5 (after Garrucci).

due, according to De Rossi, to the work having been executed by Greek artists.

On the other hand the presence of the dove would seem to indicate baptism; the canes have been interpreted as symbolizing the Jordan; and the second figure may be a disciple witnessing the event, or a representative of the church as in the mosaics in the church of S. Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna in the series depicting our Lord's miracles. The marks round the head, usually explained as representing the crown of thorns, have a parallel in the indications of water in the fresco in the cemetery of S. Callistus (Ex. 3) mentioned above, though here they are much smaller[1].

[1] Garr., vol. i, p. 368, and vol. ii, tav. 39, 1.—De Rossi, *Bullettino di archeologia cristiana*, 1872, p. 64.

Garrucci first explains the fresco as a scene of the Passion; then, after a long discussion, concludes that it represents our Lord's baptism. De Rossi in the *Bullettino* describes it as the mocking of the soldiers, though without discussing the question. F. X. Kraus interprets it as the crowning with thorns, and refers to Le Blant (*Revue de l'art chrétien*, 1894, p. 37) as seeing Docetic influence in it, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, vol. i, p. 161, Freiburg im B., 1896.

Ex. 6. *Symbolical fresco in S. Callistus. Third century.*

The region of S. Soter in the cemetery of S. Callistus dates from the third century. A fresco painted on the semicircle at the back of an arcosolium in one of its chambers has given it

Fig. 6 (after Garrucci).

the name of the chapel of the sheep. A loculus has been cut across the picture since it was painted, but its general features are clear (Fig. 6).

In the centre is the Good Shepherd carrying a sheep on His back and with two at His feet. On either side water is falling and two men are hurrying to it, holding out their hands to drink from it. Below are sheep at each corner, over which the water descends in a shower.

On the wall to the right is represented a beardless Moses

raising his left foot on a stone to loosen his shoe, then a bearded figure striking the rock, while a third hastens toward it holding out his hands in the same attitude as the two figures in the central painting (Fig. 7). The painting opposite represents the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves[1].

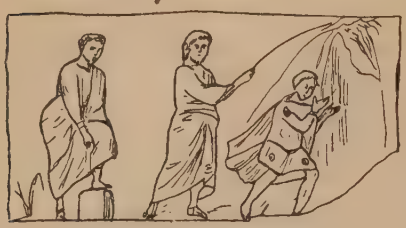

Fig. 7 (after Garrucci).

To understand the significance of this picture we must consider three post-Constantinian representations of baptism.

Ex. 7. *Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus.* 359.

The sarcophagus of Junius Bassus in the Crypt of S. Peter's dates from the year 359. Its front consists of a double row of scenes from the Old and New Testaments, standing in the recesses of an arcade of carved and twisted pillars. In the spandrels of the lower arcade are small reliefs in which Christ and the Christian disciple are represented as lambs. In the second space from the right He is represented laying His right fore foot on the head of the disciple lamb, while a stream flows over its head from the beak of a dove and the hind quarters of the lamb are covered with a stream that flows down from a rock (Fig. 8).

Fig. 8.

The other reliefs represent:—first, on the right, raising of the dead (much damaged); second, the receiving of the law (?); third, the Lamb multiplying loaves; fourth, the Christ

[1] De Rossi, vol. ii, Tav. d'Aggiunta A, and vol. iii, p. 70, tav. 9.—Garr., vol. ii, tav. 18, 2 and 4.

Lamb striking the rock (while a disciple lamb drinks from the water which flows down in a stream similar to that represented in the Baptism scene); and fifth, the Christ Lamb meeting the disciple lamb in a ship at sea.

The similarity of the cycle with that in the Chapel of the Sacraments in the cemetery of S. Callistus leaves no doubt of the meaning of the relief[1].

The engraving in Garrucci fails to give the water flowing over the hind quarters of the lamb.

Ex. 8. *Unpublished drawing of a Sarcophagus.*

De Rossi (*Bullettino*, 1876, p. 11) refers to an unpublished drawing of a sarcophagus made by a Flemish archaeologist Philip de Winghe, in which 'the centre of the front is occupied by the mystic lamb, whose feet are in a stream, while on its head and back there flow two streams of water from the dove which descends from heaven.'

The feature of the stream flowing from the dove's mouth reappears in the mosaic representing the Baptism of Christ in the Arian baptistery of Ravenna (S. Maria in Cosmedin). According to Strzygowsky the same feature was in the original in the orthodox baptistery, but was destroyed and remade to represent the water as poured from a vessel in the hand of the Baptist (*Icon. d. Taufe Christi*, p. 10).

Ex. 9. *Sarcophagus at Arles. I. Fourth–fifth centuries.*

In the third chapel of the museum at Arles is a representation of the Baptism of our Lord on the small end of a sarcophagus of the fourth or fifth century.

The Baptist is represented bearded, standing on the left, clothed in a skin which leaves his right shoulder free (Fig. 9). He lays his right hand on the head of the Saviour and slightly raises the left. The Saviour is represented as a

[1] Garr., vol. v, tav. 322.—*Bull.* 1876, 10–11.—*R. Q. S.* 1896, p. 325.

nude boy with his arms slightly raised and hands held up, and turning towards the water which falls in a mass like a twisted pillar from a knob of rock in the centre. Over the head of the Baptist is the dove with outstretched wings flying down towards the middle. The stone is divided down the centre of the stream of water, and on the other half (if the two parts really belong to one another) is represented a figure in tunic and pallium holding a scroll in his hand. The whole is very roughly executed; the water flows over the feet of the Saviour (the engraving in Garrucci does not give this feature).

Fig. 9 (after Garrucci).

On the corresponding end is represented Moses, bearded, and clothed in a toga, striking a similar rock from which a similar stream flows down (Fig. 10). On the right side of the water is a Jew in tunic and chlamys running towards it and

Fig. 10 (after Garrucci).

holding out his hands to catch it as it falls. In the space corresponding to that occupied by the Baptist is another figure in tunic and chlamys holding up his hand in a similar attitude. Such representations of Moses striking the rock with the water falling in this peculiar way are very common both at Arles and at Rome [1].

With this should be compared the carving on another sarcophagus-end in the same museum.

Ex. 10. *Sarcophagus at Arles. II. Fourth or fifth century.*

On the left is represented a beardless figure clothed in a toga standing in front of a tree (Fig. 11). In the centre is

Fig. 11 (after Garrucci).

a stream of water flowing straight down from a knob of rock in the form described in the last example. In the middle of the stream directly under the rock stands a nude boy

[1] Garr., vol. v, tav. 351, 5 and 6.—Le Blant, *Sarcoph. d'Arles*, pl. xv. 1.

holding his hands down and turning his face to the right. The water half covers him.

The stone has either been sawn in two down the centre, or is joined to a similar piece on which is represented the stream of water towards which two figures are hastening to drink[1].

The engraving in Garrucci represents the boy as more covered by the water than he is in the original carving.

With these it is interesting to compare a passage in the 'African Acts of S. Perpetua' (J. A. Robinson: *Texts and Studies*, Cambridge, vol. i, p. 29).

In her second vision the saint sees her brother Dinocrates, who had died at the age of seven years and no doubt without having been baptized, trying to get at the water of a font (piscina, κολυμβήθρα) to drink, but is unable to do so as the rim is above his head. In a later vision she sees him cleansed, clothed and refreshed, the rim of the font is lowered to his waist, the normal level, and he drinks water out of a stream that never fails, which she interprets as a sign that he has had the loss of the sacrament on earth made good to him in heaven.

'Erat deinde in ipso loco ubi Dinocrates erat piscina plena aqua, altiorem marginem habens quam erat statura pueri, et extendebat se Dinocrates quasi bibiturus. Ego dolebam quod et piscina illa aquam habebat, et tamen propter altitudinem marginis bibiturus non esset. Et experrecta sum et cognovi fratrem meum laborare. Sed fidebam me profuturam labori eius, et orabam pro eo omnibus diebus quousque transivimus in carcerem castrensem, munere enim castrensi eramus pugnaturi; natale tunc Getae Caesaris. Et feci pro illo orationem die et nocte gemens et lacrymans ut mihi donaretur. Die quo in nervo mansimus ostensum est mihi hoc; video locum illum quem retro videram et Dinocratem mundo corpore bene vestitum refrigerantem, et ubi erat vulnus video cicatricem, et piscinam illam quam retro videram, submisso margine ad umbilicum pueri, et aquam de ea trahebat sine

[1] Garr., vol. v, tav. 398, 9.—Le Blant, pl. i. figs. 2 and 3.

cessatione; et accessit Dinocrates et de ea bibere coepit; quae fiala non deficiebat, et satiatus accessit de aqua ludere more infantium gaudens et experrecta sum. Tunc intellexi translatum eum esse de poena.' Ch. 7.

From these examples we see the close connexion of idea in all these subjects. In each sarcophagus the representation of Moses striking the rock so frequently associated with the figures hastening to drink is connected with that of baptism; in the case of Ex. 9 with the baptism of Christ, in Ex. 10 with that of a catechumen, while in Ex. 7 the catechumen, and in Ex. 8 Christ, are each symbolized by a sheep.

In the vision of S. Perpetua we have the same idea of the drinking of the water directly connected with baptism.

This general agreement in the fourth and fifth centuries from France, Spain, and Rome points to a widespread conventional symbolism. Christian sarcophagi do not show much originality in execution, and repeat designs in forms little different from those generally found in the catacombs. These would need some time to become established and to spread throughout the West. This fact, supported by the second-century evidence from Africa, justifies us in holding that the fresco in the chapel of the sheep in S. Callistus (Ex. 6) should be interpreted as a symbolical representation of baptism.

Exx. 11, 12. *Gold treasure from Sinigaglia. Seventh or eighth century.*

This interpretation is further confirmed by a similar symbolic representation of baptism on a gold treasure found in 1880 near Sinigaglia, and which came into the possession of Cav. C. Rossi. The work is in the Lombard or late Ravennese style, and is possibly as late as the seventh or eighth century, but it carries on the traditional symbolism of the lamb and the fish so frequently found in the catacombs. In one scene a bishop is represented, standing on a mound with two sheep

on each side (Fig. 12). He holds a palm branch in his left hand, and in his right is a jug from which he pours water over one of the sheep. There can be no doubt that this is intended to symbolize baptism, as the corresponding picture pourtrays the Eucharist; and that the sacrament so symbolized was administered by affusion is proved by another scene on the same casket, where a bishop is represented in his vestments, holding a pastoral staff in his left hand, while he pours water over the head of a kneeling woman out of a spoon or bowl which he holds in his right (Fig. 13)[1].

Fig. 12.

Fig. 13.

Three doubtful representations.

A fresco in the cemetery of SS. Petrus and Marcellinus is generally interpreted as the healing of the blind, but might possibly refer to baptism.

[1] *R. Q. S.* 1888, p. 148.

It represents a beardless figure clothed in a tunic and chlamys and holding a rod in his left hand, while he lays his right on the head of a boy who is clothed in a short tunic and barefoot. The boy seems to lean back a little and hold his hands in front of him, in which action Garrucci sees an indication of blindness.

The companion picture represents a similar beardless figure striking the rock. The rod in the hand of the principal figure suggests some connexion of idea between the two, and the healing of the blind is generally represented by the touching of the eyes, rather than the laying on of hands; but the absence of any indication of water makes the reference to baptism very doubtful [1].

A somewhat similar picture formerly in a cemetery on the Via Latina (Garr. 40, 1) now destroyed, and a picture in the cemetery of S. Domitilla, where a woman lays her hands on the head of a girl (Garr. 33, 3), suggest that we have here merely a scene of benediction.

Another painting in the cemetery of S. Priscilla may possibly represent baptism. A figure to the right lays his hand on the head of another who is clothed in a long white dress. After careful examination this has been pronounced by Mgr. de Waal as a representation of the healing of the blind, but solely on the ground that the figure is clothed [2].

Ex. 13. *Glass fragment in the Vatican. Fourth or fifth century.*

This, however, is no conclusive proof, as is shown by the cut-glass fragment of the fourth or fifth century found in the ruins of the Roman house near the baths of Diocletian, and now in the Museo Cristiano of the Vatican Library. On it is a clothed child apparently about to step to the right out of

[1] Garr., vol. ii, tav. 44, 2 and 3.

[2] *Bull.* 1888, tav. iii.—Hennecke, E., *Altchristliche Malerei und altkirchliche Literatur*, p. 70, Leipzig, 1896.

some vessel or pool which has been broken off (Fig. 14). She turns her head to the left towards a male figure clothed in a toga with a halo round his head. He points with the right hand to the child and turns his head to the left, as if others were following from that direction. His name Mirax is given as well as that of the child Alba. Above from an inverted pitcher-mouth a stream descends on the child's head, the hand of a figure to the right is laid on the head also; the rest is broken off. A dove flies down to the left with an olive branch in its beak[1].

Fig. 14 (after Garrucci).

It has been suggested that *alba*=*albata*, and that the child has been clothed in white after the actual baptism (cf. the *consignatorium alvatorum* built at Naples, below, p. 339). In the absence of further indications, all we can say is that this fresco in the cemetery of S. Priscilla may very well represent baptism, but we have no sufficient proof to justify our using it as evidence.

Summary of evidence for the Ages of Persecution.

To sum up the evidence from archaeology for and against the practice of baptism by immersion in pre-Constantinian times. We have four actual representations of the act, one

[1] Garr., vol. vi, 464, 1.—*Bull.* 1876, tav. 1, 1, pp. 7 ff.

from the first or early second century, two from the late second or early third, one from the middle of the third. We have one certain symbolical representation from the third, one possible one from the second or third. Two that are more than doubtful date from the third.

Of the five certain representations four come from the cemetery of S. Callistus, though only two from the same region, one from that of SS. Petrus and Marcellinus. In favour of immersion is the fact that the figure is represented naked and standing in the water in all examples that certainly refer to baptism (Exx. 1, 2, 3 & 4).

Against is the fact, that in no case is there any attempt to represent immersion, and in two cases the actual affusion is represented, once directly (Ex. 3), and once symbolically (Ex. 6).

In the three cases where the water is clearly marked it only rises above the feet, and is therefore not deep enough to allow of immersion.

In the paintings we have examined there is no sign of influence from liturgical custom, or of desire for historical accuracy. They are less self-conscious than those of later date, and seem to aim simply at representing what was felt to be the essential idea of baptism.

The obvious difficulty of representing immersion must be allowed its full weight. We have no evidence to show how it would have been attempted in pre-Constantinian times, but the frequent representations in the fourth-century sarcophagi of the drowning of the Egyptians suggest a very different treatment. It is interesting also to compare the picture of the Flood in the Vienna Genesis, the passage of the Red Sea on the gates of S. Sabina at Rome (Fig. 15), or that of the figure of the Jordan on the chair of Maximian at Ravenna (Ex. 42, Fig. 39), where the idea of immersion is intended to be expressed.

To conclude, the direct evidence from archaeology alone may not be conclusive to show that in pre-Constantinian times baptism by affusion only was practised generally or

indeed in any one single case ; but it does show, that there was nothing repugnant in it to the general mind, that no stress was laid on total immersion, that the most important moments were held to be those when water was poured over the catechumen, and when the minister laid his hand on his head. This, taken in connexion with the known customs of later ages, makes it more than probable that the usual method of administration was by affusion only.

Fig. 15 (after Garrucci).

CHAPTER II

THE AGE OF THE COUNCILS

Christian Sarcophagi.

After the conversion of Constantine the Christian community rapidly increased in wealth, and now that persecution had come to an end it was no longer necessary to bury underground in the catacombs, or to conceal the fact when a tomb belonged to one of the adherents of the favoured religion. These two causes combined to make sarcophagi the most characteristic examples of Christian art in the post-Nicene age; for as soon as there was no longer the same reason for buying cheaply from the 'ready-made' pagan shops, or being content with an ambiguous symbolism that would not attract attention from outsiders, an original style grew up that was purely Christian and was only very slightly influenced by the earlier artistic tradition of Rome.

On the other hand the marked similarity to one another in the examples that have survived, and the general low level of workmanship that they display, seem to prove that they were mere productions of journeymen-workers, turned out mechanically from the shop. This, however, while detracting from their artistic merit adds to their archaeological value; the fact that their choice and treatment of subjects are nearly stereotyped shows that they reflect in some degree the general mind of the church, and gives them a quasi-official sanction. We must not, however, press this point too far, as the conventional decoration of our modern cemeteries can hardly be said to represent fairly the average Christian sentiment of our own day.

Most of these sarcophagi are of Roman origin and have been collected in the Museo Cristiano at the Lateran. The next largest collection is that of Arles, while several more examples exist in various parts of Spain, France, and Italy.

Those dating from the second century are very simple, being merely ornamented with figures of the Good Shepherd or the female figure raising her hands in prayer generally known as an Orante. In the third century we find the ideas suggested by the former of these elaborated into pastoral and vintage scenes, a single design occupying as a rule the whole front of the sarcophagus. In the early fourth century this is resolved into a symmetrical disposition of a cycle of scenes usually separated from one another under arcades; while in later examples they are more crowded together and less clearly defined. The examples at Rome date almost entirely from before the troubles of the fifth century, though in France they probably continued to be produced till a somewhat later date. Those preserved at Ravenna are of a different type and represent a new tradition. Thus the evidence that we may draw from this source throws light on the custom of Latin Christianity and of the western Church generally in the fourth and early fifth centuries.

The baptismal representations on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (359), and on two of those at Arles, have been already described on pp. 248–251.

Ex. 14. *Sarcophagus at Ancona. Fourth century.*

On the lid of a sarcophagus in the cathedral of Ancona the Saviour is represented as a nude boy, standing immediately under a stream of water which flows behind Him from a sort of rose (Fig. 16). He holds His hands down and leans slightly to the left towards the Baptist, who lays his right hand on His head, and slightly raises his left hand. To the right stands a figure (? of a prophet) with a scroll in his hand. There is no dove. The group is to the extreme right

Fig. 16 (after Garrucci).

of the lid of the sarcophagus, the other subjects being the Nativity and the Magi, Moses receiving the law (?), and David and Goliath (?)[1].

The sarcophagus bears the name of Gorgonius; but in the opinion of Garrucci this can hardly refer to the man, mentioned by Symmachus, who became consul in the year 379, unless indeed he had his coffin prepared some time before his death, since there is no mention in the inscription of his having borne office.

Ex. 15. *Sarcophagus from Soissons. Fourth or fifth century.*

A sarcophagus of the fourth or fifth century was formerly at Soissons in the church of Ste. Marie. It had been used for the tomb of S. Vodalis who died 720 A. D., and was seen by Mabillon and published in the *Annales Ordinis S. Benedicti* in 1703–39.

On it Christ is represented on the right as a boy, nude, standing on dry ground, holding His hands down, and turning slightly to the left (Fig. 17). Two other figures clothed in tunic and pallium stand on the left, both of whom raise their right hands; the left foot of the figure nearer the Saviour is raised as if on a stone. Between Christ and the Baptist the water falls in a stream broadening from a point. The dove is seen above to the right.

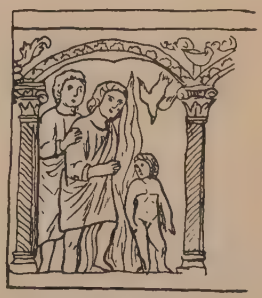

Fig. 17 (after Garrucci).

The sarcophagus is divided into five arcades, and in the niche corresponding is Moses striking the rock; the other subjects are the woman with the issue of blood, the centurion, and the soldiers sleeping by the cross[2].

[1] Garr., vol. v, tav. 326, 1.—Str., p. 6, and taf. 1, 6.

[2] Garr., vol. v, tav. 403, 4.—Le Blant, *Les sarcophages chrétiens de la Gaule*, p. 14.—Str. p. 6, taf. 1, 7.

Ex. 16. *Sarcophagus at Madrid.*

On a sarcophagus in the Academy of History in the National Museum of Madrid, Christ is represented as a boy, nude, and nearly up to His knees in water which flows behind Him from a boss of rock above (Fig. 18). He holds His hands down and turns His head to the left. The Baptist, clothed in an exomis, stands on dry land on the left, laying his hand on the Saviour's head and slightly raising his left foot. The dove is represented above on the rock.

Fig. 18.

The other subjects are—Moses striking the rock, the healing of the blind, Christ surrounded by four apostles, and the sacrifice of Isaac[1].

Ex. 17. *Sarcophagus at the Lateran. I.*

The baptism of Christ is twice represented on sarcophagi in the Lateran collection.

On that numbered 183 Christ appears as a boy, standing in the water which rises to His knees, holding His hands down and turning His face to the left (Fig. 19). The water falls in two streams, one of which descends on the head of the Saviour, while the other takes the usual pillar-like form to

Fig. 19 (after Garrucci).

[1] Garr., vol. v, tav. 341, 3.—Str., p. 6, taf. 1, 8.

the right of the group and turning to the left flows over His feet. The Baptist stands on the opposite side, clothed in a skin, raising his left foot on a stone.

The hand of the Baptist holding a patera and the head of the Saviour are restorations, as well as (?) the first of the two streams just mentioned.

The other scenes are—Christ before Herod, the imprisonment of S. Peter, the manger and the shepherds, and the raising of Lazarus [1].

No mention of the restorations is made in the official catalogue of the Museum.

Ex. 18. *Sarcophagus at the Lateran. II.*

No. 152 (a) is a fragment to the left of which the Baptist is represented as bearded, clothed in a woollen exomis and with bare feet. Christ stands nude, holding His hands down, while the water rises to His thighs. The top part of the carving is broken off, so that the position of the hand of the Baptist, the existence of the dove, and the source of the water cannot be determined. The rest of the fragment is occupied by a scene of the mystic feast of fish and bread [2].

This fragment was discovered by Prof. Marucchi in the Vatican gallery, and was transferred to the Museo Cristiano in the Lateran in 1866.

Ex. 19. *Sarcophagus from S. Maria Antiqua.*

Another example has recently been discovered in the excavation of the church of S. Maria Antiqua in the Forum (Fig. 20). The Baptist, clothed in a toga, stands on dry ground to the

Fig. 20.

[1] Garr., vol. v, tav. 316, 1.—Str., p. 6, taf. 1, 9.
[2] De Rossi, *Bull.*, 1882, p. 90, tav. ix.

right and lays his hand on the head of the Saviour. Christ is represented as a boy, nude, and turning His head slightly to the left. The water rises to His knees. The dove appears over His head flying towards the right [1].

Three Sarcophagi in bad condition.

Three others may be mentioned to make the list complete.

Ex. 20.

A part of a frieze from the Aliscamps at Arles, nearly destroyed by exposure to the weather; published by Le Blant from an earlier print [2].

Ex. 21.

Another in a similar condition at Servannes near Arles, but described in a sixteenth-century Latin MS. at Paris, in the handwriting of Nicolas Claude Fabri de Peiresc, as possessing the same features of the dove and the falling water (Ioan. Bapta pellibus indutus baptizans superveniente columba aquam de coelis cadentem rostro gestante) [3].

Ex. 22.

An unpublished sarcophagus in the basilica of SS. Nereus and Achilleus [4].

Two others at Naples, believed by Ciampini (*Mon. vett.*, vol. ii, ch. 4) to be those of Agilulphus, husband of Theodelinda (590), and of Arrichius, second Duke of Beneventum (591), are probably spurious [5].

A doubtful example occurs on a sarcophagus in the church of Le Mas d'Aire on the Adour in south-west France. At the

[1] *Bull.*, 1901, p. 205, tav. vi.

[2] Le Blant, *Sarcophages d'Arles*, xii, fig. 3, text 24, xvii.—Str., p. 7, taf. 1, 10.

[3] Garr., vol. v, tav. 316, 2.—Le Blant, xxix and xxx, text pp. 46 ff.—Str. p. 8, tav. 1, 13.

[4] Kraus, *Real-Encyclopaedie*, art. 'Taufe,' and referred to by Grousset, *Études sur l'histoire des sarcophages chrétiens*, Paris, 1885, 105, n. 187.

[5] Kraus, *R.-E.*, art. 'Taufe,' p. 834.

extreme right a naked man is carved, turning towards the right, with hands slightly raised. Before him a robed figure, standing equally on both feet, lays his hand on the naked man's head. Both stand under a tree. No water is indicated, but a dove (?) sits in the tree. Next to this group are to be seen Adam and Eve on either side of the tree of knowledge[1].

This may be intended for a scene of baptism, as the restoration to grace forfeited at the Fall, but is more probably intended for the Creation of man. Pératé (*Archéologie Chrétienne*, p. 323) describes it as 'le baptême d'un adolescent.'

Summary of evidence from Sarcophagi.

Thus we have thirteen examples of the representation of the baptism of Christ from sarcophagi. In every case where the carving is perfect He is represented nude and as a boy, while the Baptist lays his hand on His head or at least raises it with that object. In one case (Ex. 15) He stands on dry ground, once the water flows over His feet (Ex. 9), twice it rises to His knees (Exx. 16, 17), once to the thighs (Ex. 18). In four cases it falls from a knob of rock or spout, in two of which it falls all over His body.

It will be noticed that in all examples hitherto cited, with the exception of Exx. 1, 4 and 9, the Saviour is represented as holding His hands down and not raising them in the attitude of prayer. The dove also is usually represented as visible at the moment of baptism; whereas in Luke iii. 21 it is stated that our Saviour was praying when the heavens opened, and in all three Gospels the dove is described as descending after He had gone up out of the water. It is obvious therefore that the conception of the scene is drawn from current practice rather than from the pages of Scripture.

In connexion with these it is interesting to study other

[1] Garr., vol. v, tav. 301, 3.—Le Blant, *Sarcophages de la Gaule*, p. 98 and pl. xxvi.

evidence from the western Church as to the mode of administering baptism to catechumens.

Ex. 23. *Tombstone from Aquileia. Fifth century.*

We have described the Vatican glass fragment above, Ex. 13. A similar treatment appears on a fifth-century tombstone at Aquileia, which was probably erected in memory of a young girl who died soon after her baptism.

She is represented as standing in a large bowl, nude, wearing a necklace, and holding her hands down (Fig. 21). The water streams on her over the crescent-shaped lower edge of a circular opening which is sown with small crosses or stars and out of which a dove flies. On the right a man in a tunic lays his hand on her head; to the left stands a haloed figure clothed in a toga and pointing to her with his right hand. There is a tree on each side of the group[1].

Fig. 21 (after Garrucci).

This is described by Garrucci as an example of baptism by affusion 'as well as immersion' (!).

Ex. 24. *Spoon from Aquileia. Fourth or fifth century.*

From the same place comes a spoon, dating from the fourth or fifth century, with a scene of the same nature engraved on its bowl (Fig. 22). A nude figure stands in a large shallow

[1] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 487, 26.—*Bull.*, 1876, tav. 1, 2.

basin; above him appears the dove from whose beak the water descends. A figure to the left in an exomis holds a patera in the stream over the head of the catechumen, while another figure stands on the right. At the point of the spoon on the left is a figure in a toga standing by a sort of altar [1].

Fig. 22 (after Garrucci).

This spoon, which was found with several others inscribed with various names, was probably not used for liturgical purposes. Possibly it was a present given on the occasion of the ceremony pictured on it.

The feature of the stream from the mouth of the dove occurs on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (Ex. 7), on the ivories in the Bodleian Library (Ex. 29), in the British Museum (Ex. 33), at Amiens (Ex. 30), at Milan (Ex. 28), on the MS. of Rabula (Ex. 34), in the Etzschmiadzin Gospel Book (Ex. 35), and in the mosaic of the Arian baptistery at Ravenna, all of which are described below.

Use of a patera in Baptism.

According to Strzygowski (*Iconographie*, p. 10) this feature was also found in the original mosaic in the orthodox baptistery (S. Giovanni in Fonte) in the same city. He maintains that the patera from which the Baptist pours the water in the picture, as it now appears, must be due to a later restoration, on the ground that it is borrowed from a liturgical use first arising in the fourteenth century. A similar vessel is, however, represented on this spoon from Aquileia, which he seems to have overlooked.

In the so-called Attila treasure at Vienna are two paterae of gold weighing 287 gr. and 305 gr. respectively. They are each of the same design, and have a cross in the centre

[1] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 462, 8.

round which run letters read by Dr. Joseph Hampel as follows:—

ΔΕΛΥΔΑΤΟCΑΝΑΠΑVCONA(ΦΙ)ΕΙCΠ(Α)ΝΤΟΝΑΜΑΡ(*sic*)ΤΙΟΝ

διὰ ὕδατος ἀναπλύσων ἀφιεὶς πάντων (*sic*) ἁμαρτιῶν (Fig. 23),

'if thou purifiest thyself with water thou shalt be free from all sin.' The word ὕδατος at least he considers to be certain. He holds that these paterae were baptismal vessels ('Taufschalen') and attributes them to the fourth or fifth century. Kondakov, however, believes the letters to be Bulgarian, and would therefore assign them to a date later than 864, when the Bulgarian race adopted Christianity [1].

Fig. 23.

There is good reason to suppose that a bronze bowl with a handle, found in ruins above the cemetery of Praetestatus and now in the Museo Kircheriano at Rome, was also used for the administration of baptism. It is in the shape of a hemispherical pan embossed with anglers, boats, and fishes, and in the centre is the head of a river-god with crab-claws growing out of his head, like those on the head of the allegorical figure of Jordan in the Arian baptistery at Ravenna (Fig. 24) [2].

In the history of S. Silvester in the *Liber Pontificalis* (314–335) we read that Constantine gave to the church which he built at Ostia a basin of silver for baptism weighing 20 pounds ('pelvem ex argento ad baptismum pens. lib. xx.' *Lib. Pont.*

[1] Hampel, J., *Der Goldfund von Nagy Szent Miklós*, Buda-Pesth, 1886, pp. 27 and 64, Fig. 16.—Kondakov, N. P., *Geschichte und Denkmäler des Byz. Emails*, p. 39. Another at Odessa. Venturi, *Storia dell' arte Italiana*, vol. ii, 1902, p. 30.

[2] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 461.

S. Silvester, ch. 28). The weight of this vessel shows it must have been used as a font, as in the two examples from Aquileia,

Fig. 24 (after Garrucci).

while the whole basin of the Lateran baptistery seems to have been covered with silver (*ib.* ch. 13). A similar gift was made by Xystus III (432–440) to the basilica of S. Laurence of a 'conca aurocalca pens. lib. xx,' as well as of 'ministerium ad baptismum vel paenitentiae ex argento pens. lib. v'; either a vessel used for oil, such as the 'patenam argenteam auroclusam chrismalem pens. lib. v' that Constantine gave to the 'titulus Equitii' near the baths of Diocletian, or one similar to that in the Museo Kircheriano described above (Xystus, ch. 6, Silvester, ch. 3).

Fig. 25.

Ex. 25. *Cross-shaft at Kells. c.* 800.

A similar vessel also appears in a baptismal scene on a broken cross-shaft at Kells, which

was the chief seat of the Columban monks about the year 800 A. D. (Fig. 25)[1].

Description of the Lateran font.

The font in the baptistery which Constantine built at the Lateran is described in the *Liber Pontificalis* (Silvester, ch. 13) as having been made of porphyry and overlaid with silver. In the centre rose a candelabrum also of porphyry, ending in a golden vessel containing balm, which burning with a wick of asbestos served a double purpose of giving light and perfume. On the edge of the piscina, probably opposite the steps by which the catechumen entered the water, were life-sized silver figures of Christ and the Baptist. Between them was a lamb of gold, from whose mouth a stream of water fell into the basin (unless indeed it flowed in four streams from a rock at its feet, as so frequently represented in early Christian art), while seven figures of stags ranged round its parapet served the same purpose.

> Fontem sanctum ubi baptizatus est Augustus Constantinus ex lapide porfyretico et ex omni parte coopertum intrinsecus et foris et desuper et quantum aquam continet ex argento purissimo lib. iii viii. In medio fontis columna porfyretica qui portat fiala aurea ubi candela est, pens. auro purissimo lib. lii, ubi ardet in diebus Paschae balsamum lib. cc, nixum vero ex stippa amianti. In labio fontis baptisterii agnum aureum fundentem aquam pens. lib. xxx, ad dexteram agni, Salvatorem ex argento purissimo, in pedibus v, pens. lib. clxx; in leva agni, beatum Iohannem Baptistam ex argento, in pedibus v, tenentem titulum scriptum qui hoc habet 'ecce agnus Dei, ecce qui tollit peccata mundi'; pens. lib. cxxv.
>
> Cervos argenteos vii. fundentes aquam, pens. sing. lib. lxxx.
>
> Tymiaterium ex auro purissimo cum gemmis prasinis xlviiii, pens. lib. xv.

Innocent I (401–417) gave a similar stag to the 'titulus Vestinae' weighing 25 pounds.

The figure of the stag is of frequent occurrence in connexion

[1] J. Romilly Allen, *Christian Symbolism in Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 231.

with baptisteries and baptismal scenes (e.g. at Salona, in the cemetery of Pontianus, &c.).

The water seems to have fallen in a stream from some such head in the baptistery of S. Stephen built by Eustorgius at Milan (early sixth cent.), which is thus described by Ennodius (*Carm.* ii. 149, Migne, *Patr. Lat.* lxiii. p. 361; cf. *Bull.*, 1876, p. 12):—

En sine nube pluit sub tectis imbre sereno,
Et coeli facies pura ministrat aquas.
Profluа marmoribus decurrunt flumina sacris,
Atque iterum rorem parturit ecce lapis.
Arida nam liquidos effundit pergula fontes,
Et rursus natis unda superna venit.
Sancta per aethereos emanat lympha recessus
Eustorgii vatis ducta ministerio.

The present building at the Lateran dates as far as the lower part is concerned from the time of Xystus III (432–440), during whose pontificate the above description was written. He, however, probably altered the outline but little, and there is good reason to believe that the lists of Constantine's gifts were copied from contemporary records and do not represent later accumulations (Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.*, *ad loc.* notes; cf. also his description of the baptistery in *Origines du culte chrétien*, p. 298).

Analogies from the customs of the Baths.

In Greek and Roman baths it was common for the water to flow from the heads of animals (*Dict. of Class. Antiq.*, art. 'Baths'). A Greek vase painting shows four women standing under such jets (Fig. 26). It was also customary for the attendant to pour water over the heads of the bathers, while the bath was always followed by anointing, as an unction by the bishop followed the act of baptism.

The orthodox baptistery at Ravenna was built by Bp. Neon in 449–452 A.D. on the foundations of an earlier building, supposed to have been a bath, while the Arian baptistery

was similarly adapted a few years later (Ricci, *Guida di Ravenna*, 1900, pp. 32 & 10).

We read in the story of the martyrdom of Perpetua that

Fig. 26.

when Saturus was covered with blood from the bite of a leopard, the crowd in the amphitheatre jokingly cried out that he had been well bathed, using the language of the baths, which the author writing at the end of the second century interpreted as an allusion to baptism.

> Inluxit dies victoriae illorum et processerunt de carcere in amphitheatrum ... sequebatur Perpetua ... item Felicitas salvam se peperisse gaudens ut ad bestias pugnaret, a sanguine ad sanguinem, ab obstetrice ad retiarium, lotura post partum baptismo secundo.
>
> Et statim in fine spectaculi leopardo eiecto, de uno morsu tanto perfusus est (Saturus) sanguine, ut populus revertenti illi secundi baptismatis testimonium reclamaverit 'salvum lotum, salvum lotum,' plane utique salvus erat qui hoc modo laverat.
>
> 'Salvum lotum' is a phrase of the baths to which καλῶς ἐλούσω corresponds. (*Texts and Studies*, vol. i. *Passio Perpetuae* cc. 18 & 21; cf. Introd. p. 8.)

So fifty years later Cyprian argues that the recognized analogy of the baths must not be pressed too far. He had been asked whether men who received baptism in sickness

were to be counted true Christians, since they were not washed in the life-giving water but had only had a little poured over them (eo quod aqua salutari non loti sint sed perfusi). He explains it is not necessary for the whole body to be touched by the water, as if it were an actual bath with salt of nitre and a seat to wash yourself in, so that aspersion or perfusion is sufficient to constitute a valid sacrament (see below, p. 312).

Fig. 27.

Analogy of Mithraic customs.

The Mithraic custom of baptism as practised in the third and fourth centuries was probably borrowed from, or at least influenced by, Christian practice. A conception of new birth suggested by, or taught in opposition to, the Christian doctrine of baptism was supposed to be involved in the Taurobolium. In the ceremony the recipient sat in a trench under a platform on which a bull was killed in such a manner as to allow the blood to fall all over him. The man so purified was described as 'renatus.' Symbolically this was represented in art by a dog drinking at the stream that flowed from the neck of the bull slain by the young Mithra (Fig. 27), as

Christian baptism was symbolized by the Jews drinking from the rock struck by Moses, or S. Peter, or by lambs, or stags drinking at a fountain (Figs. 6, 10, 11, 38)[1].

Summary of evidence for the Age of the Councils.

To sum up the conclusions drawn from the evidence from sarcophagi, from the analogy of the baths, and of Mithraic customs as to the practice of the Church in the Western empire.

In the fourth and fifth centuries baptism took place before a witness or witnesses, in a fixed spot, either in a structural baptistery, into which the water usually fell from a spout or figure-head, or in a movable basin. In the latter case the officiant poured water over the catechumen from a vessel; in the former he led him under one of the spouts, and either directed the flow over his head with the vessel or guided his head under the water with his hands. This we know from other sources was done three times.

An immersion *may* have preceded this, but there is no mention of a double act by any writer of early date, and at least it was not considered the most significant element of the rite. With the peace of the Church the ceremony has become slightly more elaborate, and the flow of water is fuller and more continuous owing to the influence of the baths. The officiant seems to have stood on a raised platform or step and not to have entered the water himself.

> L'immersion baptismale ne doit pas s'entendre en ce sens que l'on plongeât entièrement dans l'eau la personne baptisée. Elle entrait dans la piscine, où la hauteur de l'eau n'était pas suffisante pour dépasser la taille d'un adulte; puis on la plaçait sous l'une des bouches d'où s'échappaient des jets d'eau; ou encore, on prenait de l'eau dans la piscine elle-même pour la répandre sur sa tête. C'est ainsi que le baptême est représenté sur les anciens monuments[2].

[1] Bigg, C., *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, p. 237.

[2] Duchesne, *Origines du culte chrétien*, p. 302; and also *Églises Separées*, p. 93.

CHAPTER III

THE AGE OF NORTHERN INVASIONS

Christian Art after the fifth century.

THERE are but scanty remains of early Christian art dating from after the fifth century in Italy. The successive invasions of Goths, Vandals, and Lombards, if not destroying as much as is popularly supposed of the productions of earlier years, left the country impoverished, and as little inclined to spend much on costly works as it was able to train artists to execute them.

In the East, however, the policy of Diocletian in removing the seat of government from Rome, and the subsequent action of Constantine in establishing a strong centralized power at Byzantium, secured the firm holding together of the Empire for many centuries. As a consequence Byzantine art long survived that of Rome, and, in architecture at least, had a development that compares not unfavourably with the later evolution of the Gothic cathedral in the West. The gradual elaboration of Syrian architecture, with its small domed buildings, up to the construction of Justinian's great church of the Hagia Sophia is the most characteristic work of Byzantine genius, though at the same time it is the feature that has had the least influence on the artistic life of Western Europe.

The question of the nature and influence of Byzantine art cannot yet be said to be fully determined. Apart from church building its chief productions seem to have been illuminated manuscripts, and it was in executing them, and possibly also in making designs for woven stuffs, that its artists appear to have received their training. It became therefore a characteristic of its less important works that they were chiefly executed with the purpose of illustrating

continuous historical narratives, and whilst showing considerable skill in technique, they tended to become stereotyped and conventional from constant repetition of subjects that differed but little from one another. This influence is felt specially in mosaic work, ivory carving, and fresco painting, where it is generally a series of scenes that is pictured, though in such objects as flasks, gems, or medals the same style reappears [1].

Ravenna.

An exception to the general artistic poverty of Italy in the fifth and sixth centuries is to be found at Ravenna. As the seat of the court of Honorius and under the enlightened reign of Theodoric, it became for one hundred and fifty years the most important city of the West, and a series of monuments rose up within its walls upon which the most skilful artists of the day were employed, and which attracted the attention of Justinian.

The mosaic workers came from Rome, and the general plan of the churches, which are almost the sole remains of the former glory of the city, follows that of the Roman basilica, while the classical spirit is still felt in the drawing of the earlier figures in the Baptistery and S. Apollinare Nuovo. The vigour of the Gothic race appears in the originality of choice and treatment in the New Testament scenes in the nave of the latter; and the essential difference between northern and southern architecture is already seen in the mausoleum of Theodoric, for there for the first time the horizontal line gives way to the vertical as the characteristic feature in construction, and in its erection the first step was taken which inaugurated the change from classic styles of building, just as his reign may be said to be the first beginning of

[1] Kraus, F. X., *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, vol. i, bk. 9, and vol ii, bk. 13, Freiburg im B., 1896; Strzygowski, J., *Orient oder Rom*, Introd., Leipzig, 1901. For a different view see F. Wickoff, *Die Wiener Genesis*, Wien, 1895, who sees in Byzantine art merely the last stage of the decadence of that of Rome.

the Middle Ages. Theodoric had been brought up at the court of Byzantium, and the building of the church of S. Vitale fell in the time of Byzantine rule. If Justinian was not actually present at its consecration he regarded himself as in some sense its founder. He appears on the mosaics of its walls, and his authority seems to have modified the plan of the building, and to have decided that the gallery should rest not on wooden beams, as originally planned, but on stone arches in accordance with the rules of Byzantium [1].

We have therefore at Ravenna an art in which three different streams of influence, Roman, Gothic, and Byzantine, united, and in which the extent to which each makes itself felt can be traced with something like precision.

Fig. 28 (after Garrucci).

Ex. 26. *Mosaic in the Orthodox Baptistery.* 449–452.

Two important baptism scenes are to be found in the mosaics of the baptisteries at Ravenna alluded to in the last

[1] Ricci, C., *Guida di Ravenna*, p. 40, Bologna, 1900.

chapter. That in the orthodox baptistery (Baptisterium Ursianum or S. Giovanni in Fonte) was probably set up by Bp. Neon in 449–452.

Here Christ is represented bearded and with a halo, holding His hands down to His side, naked, and standing in the water which rises to His waist (Fig. 28). On the left side is the Baptist wearing an exomis and with a halo. He stands on a promontory of rock with his left foot raised, holding a jewelled cross in his left hand, while with his right he pours water from a patera over the head of Christ. Overhead is the dove flying downwards vertically; in the water to the right is an allegorical figure of Jordan marked by the name, a bearded man with a reed, holding a cloth in his hands. Plants spring from the banks [1].

According to Strzygowski the patera is a fourteenth-century restoration, as 'no such instrument was used till that date.' We have already considered the reasons for believing in its use at an earlier period. The head and right arm of the figure of Christ are restored, the halo and beard being possibly modern additions.

Ex. 27. Mosaic in the Arian Baptistery.

In the Arian baptistery (S. Maria in Cosmedin) is a similar mosaic occupying a corresponding place in the centre of the dome.

Fig. 29 (after Garrucci).

In it Christ is represented beardless, with a halo, holding His hands down to His side, and up to His waist in water (Fig. 29). The dove flies down vertically from above, and from its beak a stream descends on the head of our Lord. The Baptist stands to the right on a rock which rises out of the water. He is clothed in a spotted

[1] Garr., vol. iv, tavv. 226 and 227.—Str., p. 10, taf. 1, 14.

skin and holds a curved stick in his left hand, while he lays the right on the head of the Saviour. To the left sits Jordan, out of the water, and represented as an old man with two crab-claws growing out of his head, holding a reed in his right hand while he raises his left in astonishment (Pss. lxxvii. 16 and cxiv. 5)[1].

These two examples fall within the first and second period respectively of the history of Ravenna's greatness, while Roman influences were still strong in her art, but had been weakened by being transplanted and modified by new surroundings. They show a new conception of the scene which almost entirely breaks away from the old tradition, and would appear to be due to an attempt to picture more exactly the scenes of the Gospels.

Influence of apocryphal writings.

An interesting account of the apocryphal additions to the story of our Lord's baptism as related in the Gospels will be found in a work entitled *Ein bisher unbeachteter Bericht über die Taufe Jesu*, by Adolf Jacoby (Strassburg, Trübner, 1902). The author believes that he has traced them to a lost Church Order connected with the Syriac *Didascalia*, and therefore dating from the third century. In certain fragments of a fourth-century Epiphany sermon based on this document we find it related that at the baptism of our Lord the waters of the Jordan first fled back and then rose in a heap. Similar allusions to the miracle are quoted from Ephraem Syrus (325–379), Jacob Baradaeus (451), Jacob of Sarug (521), from several Epiphany sermons of the fifth or sixth centuries, Cyril of Jerusalem (348, *Cat.* xii. 15), from hymns of Anatolius (450), and the Ambrosian collection. The narratives of the pilgrim Antoninus Placentius (570–600) and others state that the miracle was repeated yearly, and references to the legend are found in Armenian and Coptic writings.

Jacoby believes that both the retiring of the water and the

[1] Garr., vol. iv, tav. 241.—Str., p. 10, taf. 1, 15.

rising in a heap were dwelt on to emphasize the doctrine of the Divine Nature of our Lord ; and that the former, which is alluded to in all the above writings, was suggested by Pss. cxiv. 3, 5, lxxvii. 16, while the latter, which is less frequently dwelt upon, was regarded as an act of homage to the Incarnate Word, and found support in Ps. xxviii. 3 (LXX).

He further holds that the influence of this widespread tradition can be traced in Christian art, and to its influence he ascribes the feature of the symbolic representation of the Jordan first found in the Ravenna mosaic, and that of the water rising in a heap to the waist or neck of the Saviour, which first definitely appears in the fresco at Monza (Ex. 51, c. 700). It may be doubted, however, whether the legend had any great influence on the artistic representation of the scene, for though Jordan is shown in the Ravenna mosaics as holding up his hands in astonishment, the water is not represented as receding. The fear of the river is emphasized only in the ivories at Ravenna and in the British Museum (Figs. 39, 40), while in later examples the tendency is for the allegorical figure to occupy a subsidiary place or to be omitted altogether.

It is still more doubtful if the representation of the water as rising in a heap to cover our Lord's body has any connexion with the legend. It seems rather to be merely the conventional way of indicating the river in an age when the laws of perspective were not understood.

The whole legend is obviously based on the Old Testament stories of the passage of the Red Sea and of the passing of the Jordan by the Israelites, and the rising of the waters in a heap was supposed to have taken place, not round the Saviour's body for the purpose of covering Him, but in the stream above, that He might stand on dry land while He was being baptized, just as it stood to allow the Israelites to pass over dryshod. The only persons in the whole cycle of symbolism who are conceived of as submerged are the Egyptians who pursued after the Chosen People.

Milan school of ivories. c. 500.

The rule of Theodoric (493–526) secured a time of comparative prosperity for the rest of Italy; and though the government was in the hands of one of the conquering race the old Roman civilization continued with very little consciousness of change. The influence of Byzantium or of the Goth would have been felt less elsewhere than they both were at Ravenna, and in the art of this time the old tradition is still strong.

To this period may be assigned five ivories of probable Italian origin.

Ex. 28. *Ivory in the Cathedral at Milan. c.* 500.

An ivory 'five pieces' book-cover (? originally a diptych) in the treasury of the cathedral at Milan contains sixteen scenes from the life of Christ. In that of the baptism He is represented as a beardless youth, nude, and standing up to His knees in water which falls from a pillar of rock in a copious stream behind and all round Him (Fig. 30). The Baptist stands also up to his knees in water, and holds a crooked staff in his left hand. A stream flows from the beak of the dove [1].

Fig. 30.

Garrucci describes this last feature, which we have already noticed above (p. 267), as a ray, the symbol of grace, and quotes Chrysologus, *Serm.* CLX:—'Spiritus Sanctus in specie columbae totam in caput parentis novi chrismatis pinguedinem fundit ut impleat illud quod propheta dixit "Propterea unxit te Deus tuus oleo laetitiae"'. This does not, however, exclude its being also intended for a stream of water, for we

[1] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 454.—Str., p. 13, taf. ii, 2.

may notice the same feature in the Aquileia spoon (Ex. 24, fig. 22), where it is in this stream that the baptizer holds his patera; while in the relief at Monza described below (Ex. 51), in the Berlin ivory from the Micheli collection (Ex. 52, fig. 44) as well as in Exx. 53 & 54 (fig. 45), the dove pours the water from a vessel held in its beak.

Ex. 29. *Ivory in the Bodleian Library at Oxford. c.* 500.

A very similar treatment (Fig. 31) appears on another book-cover in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, as one of twelve scenes in the life of the Saviour, who is represented in the centre throned and with the four evil beasts under His feet (Ps. xci. 13). The features of the pillar of rock, and of the water falling from it as well as from the dove's beak and rising to the Saviour's knees, are repeated, while the Baptist holds the crooked staff but stands on dry ground raising his left foot[1].

Fig. 31.

Ex. 30. *Ivory at Amiens. c.* 500.

An ivory of the same school is in the possession of M. Mallet at Amiens, and was published by M. l'Abbé E. van Dreval in the *Revue de l'Art Chrétien*, XIX, 1875, pl. xix, p. 352. In it the Baptist is represented as clothed in an exomis, holding a crooked staff and raising his left foot (Fig. 32). There is a stream that

Fig. 32.

[1] Str., p. 12, taf. ii, 1.—Westwood, *Fictile Ivories in S. Kensington Museum.* p. 55, pl. 6.

flows from the dove as well as a broad stream falling from a bossy pillar of rock. The Saviour is pictured as a boy with a simple halo and on dry ground [1].

Ex. 31. *Werden Ivory at South Kensington Museum.*

The carving on the remains of an ivory box in South Kensington Museum, and formerly at Werden in Rhenish Prussia, is of very similar workmanship to the last two examples (Fig. 33). The Saviour is represented as a nude boy and with a crossed halo. Both He and the Baptist are up to their knees in water, but on the left is a personification of the Jordan holding branches in his hands, leaning on a pitcher from which the water flows. The whole work is marked with a certain originality that seems to suggest the working of a new influence [2].

Fig. 33 (after Garrucci).

Stuhlfauth [3] points out the similarity of these works, and believes them to be productions of a Milanese school of carving, and to date from the latter half of the fifth century. He holds that the example at Milan (Fig. 30) is the oldest, while that at Amiens (Fig. 32) he suggests may date from the period between the invasion of the Huns in 452 and that of the Ostrogoths in 490. The Bodleian example he considers to be Byzantine in its details and in the style of the seventh and ninth centuries: but he holds it to be a modern forgery, mainly however on the ground that it bears a Latin inscription. That at South Kensington (Fig. 33) he would place a little later, as having a crossed nimbus and generally showing a more

[1] Stuhlfauth, G., *Die altchristliche Elfenbeinplastik*, p. 75, Mohr, Freiburg i. B. and Leipzig, 1896.

[2] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 447, 3.—Westwood, No. 99.

[3] *Die altchristliche Elfenbeinplastik*, pp. 74, 77, 199.

developed style. Strzygowski[1], on the other hand, considers this last example to date from the time of Theodosius (392–395), to which period he also ascribes the book-cover at Milan (Fig. 30); while he holds the Bodleian ivory (Fig. 31) to be a work of the school of Ravenna that became more and more influenced by Byzantium in the sixth century.

Ex. 32. *Ivory cover to the Missal of Gregory at Munich.* ? *c.* 500.

A fifth example of the same school, though not mentioned by Stuhlfauth, may be seen in the Royal Library at Munich, where it forms part of the cover of the so-called missal of Gregory the Great. (Cim. 143. Cod. Lat. 10077.)

The carving is somewhat worn, but the Saviour seems to be represented as a boy without a halo (Fig. 34). The Baptist stands on dry ground, clothed in an exomis and holding a crooked staff; he raises his right foot while he lays his hand on our Lord's head. Jordan stands on the opposite side holding in his left arm a tree, and with an inverted pitcher from which the water flows, rising to the thighs of the Saviour. The massacre of the Innocents appears above and the miracle of Cana below, as in the example from Amiens (Ex. 30, fig. 32). The ivory is attributed in the library catalogue to the eleventh or twelfth century, but the choice of subjects as well as certain peculiarities of treatment (e. g. the woman throwing up her hands in the scene of the massacre of the Innocents) seem to show that it is of the same school as the above example, and dates from the fifth or early sixth century.

Fig. 34.

[1] *Das Etzschmiadzin Evangeliar*, Wien, 1891. Cf. Kraus, *Geschichte der christlichen Kunst*, vol. i, p. 507.

Ex. 33. *Ivory in the British Museum.* ? *c.* 500.

To the same date may perhaps be referred an ivory in the Christian Antiquities room in the British Museum, in which the feature of the stream from the dove's beak reappears (Fig. 35). In it the Saviour is represented as a nude boy, with a halo, holding His hands down and standing on the ground.

Fig. 35 (from a photograph).

The head alone of the dove appears. The Baptist is scantily clothed in an exomis which leaves both arms and legs bare, and he lays his hand on the Saviour's head. To the left stands a bearded figure with wings, and clothed in a toga. There are indications of water behind the feet of Christ. On either side are candlesticks similar to those on an early fifth-century silver casket in the Museo Cristiano at the Vatican, and to those on a sarcophagus at Ravenna of the same period. The rest of the ivory is occupied with the finding of Christ in the temple, a rare subject which, however, also occurs on the Milan ivory.

This example is ascribed to the fifth century, but its peculiar features make it difficult to assign it to any particular place or date [1].

Oriental types. Ex. 34. *Rabula MS. at Florence.* 586.

The first baptism scene in which Christ appears bearded (if the mosaic at Ravenna has been altered in restoration) is in one of the miniatures of the Syriac Rabula MS. in the Biblioteca Laurenziana in Florence (Fig. 36). In it the Baptist is represented in the usual attitude, raising his left foot, but

[1] Dalton, O. M., *Catalogue of Early Christian Antiquities in the British Museum*, 1901, No. 293.—Graeven, H., *Elfenbeinwerke aus Sammlungen in England*, No. 22.—Westwood, No. 154

stooping as the Saviour is immersed in the water as far as the waist. He turns His head a little aside, and the stream or ray descends on it from above, where the hand with two outstretched fingers appears in the heavens and beneath it flies the dove. The Jordan is marked by banks on which flowers are growing[1].

Fig. 36.

The monk Rabula lived at Zagba in Mesopotamia and wrote the MS. in 586. It is the earliest example that we possess of the art of illumination by miniatures that had such a wonderful development in the later Middle Ages, and undoubtedly influenced the work of the schools of Karl the Great (Kraus, F. X., *Gesch. d. christl. Kunst*, 1, 463 & 11, 25. Freiburg im B., 1895–7).

Ex. 35. *Etzschmiadzin Gospel Book.* *c.* 500.

Very similar in design is a miniature in the Gospel book of Etzschmiadzin in Armenia. The hand in the heavens, the dove and the stream or ray reappear, but the Saviour is represented as beardless, without nimbus, and only immersed in the water as far as His loins.

Strzygowski considers that this proves the MS. to be earlier than the Rabula MS., and adds that while the style of dress and the type of the apostles' heads that appear in the margin suggest that it dates from the sixth century, the architectural ornamentation in which the pictures are set would seem to point to the fifth. He is inclined to attribute it therefore to the first half of the sixth. In any case the obvious connexion of the two miniatures would point to an archetype of earlier date than 586[2].

[1] Garr., vol. iii, tav. 130.—Str., p. 17.

[2] Strzygowsky, J., *Byzantinische Denkmäler*, I, *Das Etzschmiadzin Evangeliar*, p. 73 and taf. 6, 2, Wien, 1891.

Ex. 36. *Flask at Monza. Before* 599.

A flask at Monza may also be of Syrian origin. It is said to have been given by Gregory the Great to Theodolinda (599), but is probably of earlier date, and would seem to have served originally to bring back oil from the Holy Land, as is shown by its Greek lettering. It is ornamented with seven small scenes from the life of Christ. In that of the baptism the Saviour is represented as a boy in the water up to His knees. The Baptist in a tunic stands on dry ground raising his left foot. An angel on the right holding a cloth shows eastern influence. All three figures are haloed [1].

Ex. 37. *Bronze Medal at the Vatican.*

A bronze medal in the Museo Cristiano shows Christ up to His knees in water. The Baptist raising his foot holds the crooked staff in his left hand and lays his right on the Saviour's head. The word IORDA is written underneath, and around is the legend 'Redemptio filiis hominum'. This object, if genuine, was probably a keepsake from the Holy Land [2].

Ex. 38. *Censer from Syria. ? 6th century.*

A censer found at the convent of Mar Muza el Habashi, between Damascus and Palmyra, is now at the British Museum (Fig. 36 *a*). On it S. John is represented standing on the left with his right hand stretched out over the head of our Lord, who appears as a boy, holding His hands straight down, with the water rising to His knees. A single attendant angel holds a cloth and the dove appears overhead. There is a considerable distance between the hand of the Baptist and the head of the Saviour on which he appears to pour the water. The figures, however, are much worn, and in the companion scenes the hands are all of the same peculiar long shape, so

[1] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 433, 8.—Str., p. 14, taf. ii, 5.
[2] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 480, 15.—Str., p. 14, taf. ii, 6.—*Bull.*, 1869, p. 58.

that it is impossible to say whether it was intended to show an act of affusion [1].

Fig. 36 *a*.

The censer is attributed to the ninth or tenth centuries, but the scenes seem to follow a much earlier tradition and to be of the type found in the West in the fifth or sixth centuries, just as the fifth-century fonts of the Hauran seem to be of the same type as those of Italy and Africa (pp. 327, 350).

Ex. 39. *Horn Medallion from Egypt.* *c.* 500.

A horn medallion, found in the burial ground of Achmim, near Panoplis in Upper Egypt, represents the Baptist standing on the banks of the Jordan clothed in a short tunic and laying his hand on the Saviour's head (Fig. 37). Both are beardless, and our Lord wears a cloth round His loins. He crosses His hands over His breast and stands on dry ground. Both He and the Baptist have each a plain nimbus. The dove flies overhead, and on the right bank stands an angel in a tunic holding a cloth. This object is attributed to c. 500 [2].

Fig. 37.

[1] Dalton, O. M., *Catalogue*, No. 540. *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries in London*, 1872. Plate opp. p. 290.

[2] Forrer, R., *Die frühchristlichen Alterthümer aus dem Gräberfelde von Achmim-Panoplis*, taf. xi, 1, Strassburg, 1893 'Die Zeit der Herstellung dürfte die Mitte des ersten Jahrtausends n. Ch. sein.'

Ex. 40. *Seal at Rome. Sixth or seventh century.*

A seal, which he attributes to the sixth or seventh century, is mentioned by Stuhlfauth as existing in the museum of the German Campo Santo at Rome. He describes the figure of Christ as bearded, and mentions an angel holding a cloth as in the last example[1].

Ex. 41. *Fresco in the Cemetery of Pontianus. Sixth century.*

In a fresco in the cemetery of S. Pontianus in Rome Christ is represented as an adult and standing up to His waist in

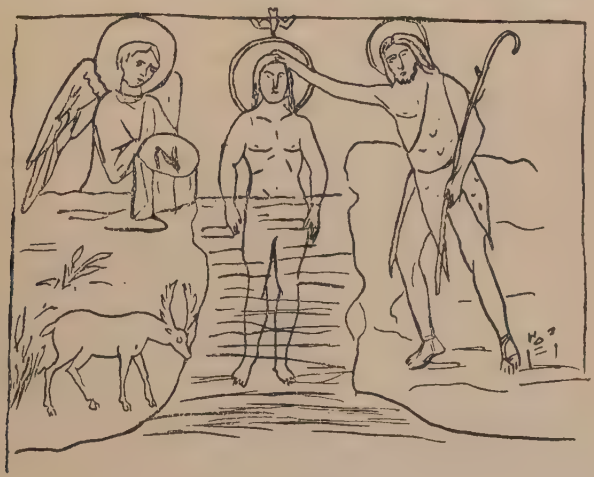

Fig. 38 (after Garrucci).

water (Fig. 38). He is bearded and has a plain nimbus round His head. The Baptist stands on a river bank to the right, holding a reed in his hands; an attendant angel, covering his hands with a cloth, appears on the left in a cloud. Below is a stag drinking. The painting has been attributed to the ninth

[1] Stuhlfauth, G., *Der Engel.*, p. 193, Mohr, Freiburg im B., 1897.—*Bull.*, 1887, p. 48.—*Römische Quartalschrift*, 1887, tav. iv, 4, p. 113.

or tenth century, but seems to follow the older Roman tradition and more probably dates from the sixth [1].

Byzantine types.

A new period of art as of literature arose with Justinian. It had certain well-defined characteristics of its own, and created types that became fixed in later ages of decadence, and lasted far into the Middle Ages with little alteration.

Fig. 39.

Ex. 42. *Chair of Maximian at Ravenna.* 454–556.

The chair of Maximian (454–556) in the treasury of the cathedral at Ravenna still represents Christ as a boy, but the water is made to rise as high as His waist (Fig. 39). The Baptist clothed in a skin stands raising his foot as usual, while two angels with cloths stand on the right. Jordan is represented allegorically in the water below as starting away in amazement. The dove appears as usual overhead [2].

Ex. 43. *Ivory at the British Museum. II. ? Sixth century.*

A very similar ivory carving is in the Mediaeval room at the British Museum, where it is described as Italian and of the sixth century. The workmanship is perhaps coarser, but the general disposition of the figures is the same (Fig. 40). The

[1] Garr., vol. ii, tav. 86, 3.—Marrucchi, O., *Éléments d'Archéologie Chrétienne*, vol. ii, p. 63.

[2] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 418, 2.—Str., p. 15, taf. ii, 8.

Baptist, clothed in an exomis, raises his left foot and lays his right hand on the Saviour's head, who is represented as a boy with a thick mass of curly hair. The water rises to His waist. Behind is a (?) female figure covering her hands with a cloth, and with a veil over her head; there were probably originally two such figures, but the right side of the ivory is imperfect. Below in the water is Jordan, with crab-claws growing out of his head, starting away in astonishment. Above is the hand appearing from heaven, while below is the dove holding in its beak a circular object. This may be intended for a crown or halo (as on a font at Liège, c. 1112), but it is more probably a patera; for though we do not find this feature elsewhere, it has a close parallel in the examples of Lombardo-Roman art cited below, where a pitcher is held by the dove in a similar manner [1].

Fig. 40
(from a photograph).

Ex. 44. *Ivory from Marsal.*

A fragment found at Marsal in Lothringen may have been part of a similar scene. Only the figure of Christ remains. The water rises to His thighs and His arms are crossed over His breast, an attitude, before the finding of the medal at Achmim (Ex. 39, fig. 37), known in no instance earlier than an Armenbibel in Munich. The water falls from a hand. The Baptist stood on the right, but the figure has been broken off, as well as those of the attendant angels if they originally existed. The Saviour is marked with a square nimbus, proving that the custom of restricting that form to persons still living

[1] Dalton, O. M., *Catalogue*, No. 294, pl. 7.—Graeven, H., *Elfenbeinwerke aus Sammlungen in England*, No. 28.

in this world was not without exceptions. The work is roughly executed [1].

Ex. 45. *Pillar at Constantinople. Sixth century.*

A sixth-century representation of Christ's baptism appears in the carving of a pillar found at Constantinople, and now in the museum of the Tschinili Kiosk in that city. It shows our Lord up to His thighs in the water, with the same two attendant angels holding cloths on the left. The figure of the Baptist is much larger than that of our Lord, but we cannot tell whether He was pictured as a boy or with a beard as the head has been broken [2].

Ex. 46. *Ring at Palermo. ? Sixth century.*

Two attendant angels also appear on a ring found at Syracuse and now in the museum at Palermo. The Saviour is described as standing up to His breast in the water, and the work is considered to be Byzantine and of the sixth or early seventh century [3].

The scene is one of a series running round the hoop of the ring. The work is very minute, but in the reproduction in Kondakov the water appears to rise no higher than the waist. There are also scenes of the crucifixion and of the visit of the Maries to the sepulchre, which Kondakov thinks are similar in style to those on the flasks in the treasury at Monza (Ex. 36).

[1] Kraus, F. X., *Kunst und Alterthum in Elsass-Lothringen*, vol. iii, p. 309 and taf. ii.

[2] Strzygowski, *Byz. Zeitschrift*, 1892, p. 575, 'Die alt. Byz. Plastik der Blütezeit,' reproduced in Schultze, *Archaeologie der altchristlichen Kunst*, p. 331.

[3] Salinar, *Del Real Museo di Palermo*, Palermo, 1873, pl. A. 1. *Arch. Journal*, vol. xxxviii, 1881, p. 154.—Kondakov, N., *Geschichte und Denkmäler des Byz. Emails*, p. 264. A precisely similar ring is to be seen in the gold collection of the British Museum, Dalton, O. M., *Catalogue*, No. 129, who refers to yet another formerly in the Pichon collection sale catalogue, 1897, No. 26, and figured by Schlumberger, *Mélanges d'arch. byz.*, p. 67.

Lombard and Carolingian types.

The seventh century in Italy is marked by the preponderance of barbarism in civil life, while all that survived of classic culture was being gathered into the monasteries. After the time of Gregory the Great (ob. 604) both liturgical custom and ecclesiastical art underwent considerable modifications, and it is from this era that it is usual to reckon the beginning of the Middle Ages.

After this date therefore we may expect to find two widely differing types of art. The one vigorous and original in idea, but rough in execution and only slightly influenced by tradition; the other continuing the older style on its general conception, but becoming more and more conventional, while the working of the new spirit appears in details.

Fig. 41 (from a photograph).

Ex. 47. *Rough ivory carving at South Kensington.*

To this period may be ascribed a very rough carving on ivory in South Kensington Museum, which represents Christ as

being baptized in a sort of tub-like font in which He stands immersed to the waist (Fig. 41). On the reverse side is a fine piece of work, probably of Carolingian origin and attributed to the eighth or ninth century. The inferior work must therefore be of earlier date[1].

Fig. 42 (from a photograph).

Ex. 48. *The Wessobrunner Gebet.* 814.

In the 'Wessobrunner Gebet,' a MS. of the year 814, preserved in the library at Munich, is an illustration of the baptism of a Jew, who stands in a small circular font which reaches to his waist (Fig. 42)[2].

Ex. 49. *Ivory from S. Mark's chair at Grado. Sixth or seventh century.*

An ivory originally forming part of the chair of S. Mark at Grado, and now in the Museo Archeologico at Milan, is considered by Graeven and Garrucci to be work of the seventh century. It represents the Evangelist baptizing Anianus with his wife and son, who stand up to the breast in water in a large tank (the son up to the neck), while

[1] Westwood, *Fictile Ivories*, No. 256.

[2] Reproduced in Springer, A., *Handbuch der Kunstgeschichte*, vol. ii, p. 93, Leipzig, 1902, 3rd edition.

the saint stands on dry ground (Fig. 43). If the date be correct this is the earliest representation of baptism in which submersion could be intended [1].

Fig. 43 (from a cast).

The chair is said to have been brought from Alexandria to Constantinople and to have been presented to the church of Grado by the Emperor Heraclius (610–640). If this is the same chair the reliefs must have been executed at an earlier date, but they cannot, in the opinion of Graeven, be much older. A companion relief in the British Museum is attributed to the sixth century.

Ex. 50. *Paliotto of S. Ambrose at Milan.* 827.

The paliotto (altar frontal) of S. Ambrogio at Milan was set up in the year 827 by Archbishop Angilbert and executed by a certain Wolfinius, as shown by an inscription on the back. On it is represented the baptism of S. Ambrose, who stands naked in a small octagonal font which reaches to his thighs, while an attendant pours water over his head from a large pitcher [2].

Ex. 51. *Relief at Monza.* *c.* 700.

The use of a pitcher also appears in a relief in S. Giovanni in Fonte at Monza (c. 700), where it is held in the beak of the dove, which flies down in the centre overhead and pours water from it over the head of the Saviour. The Baptist stands on the left, and there is one attendant angel holding

[1] Westwood, No. 156.—Graeven, H., *Frühchristliche und mittelalterliche Elfenbeinwerke aus Sammlungen in Italien*, Rom, 1900, No. 44.—Garr., vol. i. p. 570.

[2] Str., p. 36, tav. viii, 2.

a cloth to the right. The water is here for the first time definitely represented as rising miraculously in a heap, a feature which becomes very common in later times [1].

Ex. 52. *Ivory from Micheli Collection at Berlin.*

An ivory in the Berlin Museum formerly belonging to the Micheli collection at Paris shows the dove as pouring water from a pitcher over the Saviour's head, who is represented as a full-grown man, nude, holding His hands down and immersed in the water to His thighs (Fig. 44). The Baptist is clothed in an exomis of skin, holding a crooked staff, and on dry land. On the other side is the figure of Jordan, out of the water, nude, but with a cloth over his lap. He points upwards with his right hand, and in his left holds an inverted pitcher from which the water flows. Above are three winged heads of angels holding cloths. The hand appears in heaven over the dove. The work is ascribed to the seventh century [2].

Fig. 44.

Ex. 53. *Ivory at Strassburg.*

Another example presenting the same features is mentioned as being in the possession of Herr Forrer at Strassburg, and is mentioned by A. Jacoby in his *Bericht über die Taufe Jesu*. The hand of God appears above. The dove holds a pitcher in its beak, and an angel stands in the

[1] Str., p. 33, tav. viii, 1.
[2] Westwood, No. 240.—Str., p. 36, taf. viii, 3.

background to the right. S. John, on the left, lays his hand on the Saviour's head. Our Lord stands with the water rising above His thighs, and Jordan hastens in astonishment away to the right[1].

Ex. 54.

The pitcher in the beak of the dove also appears in a tenth-century ivory at Rheims, which represents the baptism of Chlodwig (Fig. 45)[2].

Fig. 45 (from a cast).

Ex. 55. *Gem found at Rome.*

A gem found at Rome represents the Baptist and our Lord, both clothed and standing in the water. The dove rests on the head of Christ whom S. John appears to embrace[3]. The water rises only as high as the ankles of the two figures.

This ring was bought by Mr. Fortnum and is now in the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford (No. 71 in the collection of Christian gems; cf. *The Archaeological Journal,* vol. xxxvii, 1880, p. 360, where it is said that the object may be anterior to the third century).

Ex. 56. *Fresco in a catacomb at Naples.* 759.

A symbol of the open heaven from which the dove descends appears in the fresco in the catacomb of S. Gennaro at Naples, which was painted soon after 759 under Greek influence (Fig. 46). The two attendant angels also appear holding cloths covering their hands, but they raise them and look up as if in prayer. The Saviour is in the water up to the thighs[4].

[1] Jacoby, A., *Bericht über die Taufe Jesu*, Strassburg, 1902, p. 82.
[2] Westwood, No. 325.
[3] Garr., vol. vi, tav. 478, 41.—*Bull.*, 1877, p. 48.
[4] Garr., vol. ii, tav. 94, 3.— Str., p. 18.

This is considered by Strzygowski to be the earliest instance in which the open heaven is represented, but we have already

Fig. 46.

met with it on the gravestone from Aquileia (Ex. 24, fig. 21). How beautiful a feature this can be made can be seen in the fresco by Fra Angelico in the cloister of San Marco at Florence, where the traditional arrangement is preserved as late as the fifteenth century in nearly all its details.

Fig. 47 (from a cast).

Ex. 57. *Ivory from Rheinau.*

On an ivory in a collection from Rheinau the Saviour stands with His feet in a small font (Fig. 47). The Baptist stands to the left, an angel on the right. The hand from

heaven and the dove with a stream issuing from its beak also appear, as well as the figure of Jordan seated on a pitcher, and another with a serpent and a fish symbolizing (?) earth and water [1].

Fig. 48 (from a cast).

Ex. 58. *Ivory from Bamberg.*

An ivory in the Royal Library at Munich originally belonging to the cathedral at Bamberg shows an angel on the right, S. John on the left, as well as the hand and the dove (Fig. 48). The water rises in a heap to the waist, and above are symbolic figures of the sun and moon with a host of angels [2].

Ex. 59. *Ivory at Darmstadt.*

Another ivory from western Germany now in the museum at Darmstadt shows Christ standing in a pool of water with a scalloped margin. Two angels stand on the right (Fig. 49) [3].

Fig. 49 (from a cast).

The classic details of these three works and their selection of features from various schools suggest that we have in them examples of Carolingian art from the eighth or ninth century.

[1] Westwood, No. 277. [2] ib., No. 275. [3] ib., No. 299.

The second Council of Nicaea (787) ordered a uniform mode of picturing the scene. It ruled that Christ should be represented in the centre between the banks of the Jordan, with S. John on the left and the two attendant angels on the right, and so the similarity of treatment that had grown up by custom was stereotyped by a positive enactment. The custom of baptizing infants had by this time become almost universal, and as the administration of the sacrament no longer formed a striking public ceremony, all temptation to modify the pictorial representation of the Gospel scene by the influence of liturgical custom was still further removed.

Ex. 60. *Menologion of Basilius II.* 976–1025.

The earliest example of such an illustration is probably that in the menologion of Basilius II (976–1025) in the Vatican Library at Rome, where the correct disposition of the figures is observed, and the water is represented as covering the body and the shoulders[1].

Summary of evidence from the age of the northern invasions.

It will be noticed that in the examples from the fifth and sixth centuries, where the older tradition is still strong, the water is made to rise to the knees, while it is still represented as falling from a rock or fountain-head (Exx. 28–30, figs. 30–32). In early Ravennese (Exx. 26, 27, figs. 28, 29) and Oriental art generally it is made to rise higher, to the thighs (Exx. 44, 45), or to the waist (Exx. 34, 35, 41, 43, figs. 38–40). In two later examples it rises to the breast (Exx. 46, 49, fig. 43), while in the latest example we have quoted (Ex. 60) it reaches as high as the neck. In all such examples, however, the Baptist is raised very little higher than the Saviour (though in the Rabula MS. he has to stoop), and in most

[1] Str., p. 19, tav. ii, 11.

cases it is only by disregarding the laws of perspective that the water can be so pictured. In the fresco at Monza (Ex. 51, c. 700) the difficulty is avoided by showing the water rising miraculously in a heap to the waist, and this feature appears frequently in later examples (e.g. in the paliotto of Salerno (eleventh century), the Egbert Codex at Trier (989–993), the font at Liège (1112), &c.). In many later examples it rises to the neck, but in no case does it cover the head.

First traces of the custom of submersion.

The Council of Chelsea (816) first ordered (Canon 11) that priests were to take care not merely to pour the consecrated water over the head of the infant, but always to 'immerse' it in the font, as the Son of God set us an example when He was thrice 'immersed' in the waters of Jordan.

> Sciant etiam presbyterii, quando sacrum baptismum ministrant, ut non effundant aquam sanctam super capita infantuum sed semper mergantur in acria: sicut exemplum praebuit per Semetipsum Dei Filius omni credenti, quando esset ter mergatus in undis Iordanis[1].

It is curious to note that the misunderstanding of the word '*mergo*' (*mergatus*) appears as Latin begins to die out as a spoken language, and that it was in England that it was first understood as involving *sub*mersion.

In the middle of the ninth century baptism by affusion was evidently still the more common practice. Walafrid Strabo (849) comments on the fact that in the past 'immersion' was not considered necessary, and that in his day it was allowable to administer the sacrament by pouring water over the catechumen, as S. Laurence is said to have done in the case of the soldier who was converted by a vision of Christ wiping the limbs of the saint after he had suffered torture. 'It is with us usually so administered' he adds, 'in the case of an

[1] Darwell Stone, *Holy Baptism*, p. 271, Longmans, 1899.—Haddan and Stubbs, *Councils and Ecclesiastical Documents*, iii, 584 (who note on the word *acria*, 'This word stands for *aqua*, or possibly for *lavacro*').

older man who cannot be baptized in a small font.' It was evidently coming to be considered that 'immersion' must mean *total* immersion, and that this was the more perfect and primitive way, though as a rule it was not feasible, except in the case of children, in the fonts that existed.

De Eccl. Reb. XXVII. Notandum non solum mergendo verum etiam desuper fundendo multos baptizatos fuisse, et adhuc posse ita baptizari si necessitas sit, sicuti in passione beati Laurentii quendam urceo allato legimus baptizatum. Hoc etiam solet evenire cum provectiorum granditas corporum in minoribus vasis tingi non patitur.

The modern Greek custom of dipping probably became universal in the East between the ninth and eleventh centuries, at the time when Byzantine art became stereotyped and so strongly marked by liturgical custom, and when original thought also gave way to rigid traditionalism. The Armenian church similarly adopted it, but retained the more primitive affusion side by side with the more recent practice.

In the time of Aquinas the newer mode of administration prevailed almost universally, and he declares it safer to baptize by 'immersion,' as it is the common use (*Summa* III, 66, 7. Tutius est baptizare per modum immersionis quia hoc habet usus communior), though other thirteenth-century evidence shows that even in this 'immersion' it was considered dangerous to allow the child's head to go under the water. (Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der christlichen Archäologie*, vol. vii, ch. 9, p. 235.)

It is curious to notice how this anxiety as to the method adopted appears as infant baptism becomes the rule. Indeed it is difficult to see how any one but a small child can be said to *be* baptized, if the word is to be interpreted as involving *sub*mersion. This was felt by Duns Scotus, who declared a priest excused if he was weak, or if the candidate was a great country fellow whom he could not lift.

Comment. in IV sentent. dist. 3, qu. 4. Excusari potest minister a trina immersione, ut si minister sit impotens et si sit unus

magnus rusticus qui debet baptizari quem nec potest immergere nec elevare. (Augusti, p. 217.)

In the sixteenth century in the English and Roman ritual affusion is recognized as equally permissible, as was also the case in the Lutheran and Calvinistic bodies; and since that time the mediaeval custom of dipping has ceased to be practised in the West except by the English Baptist community.

Conclusion of positive evidence from Archaeology.

To sum up:—

We notice from these sixty examples, ranging from the first to the tenth century and coming from Rome, Gaul, Spain, Milan, Ravenna, Armenia, Syria, Egypt, Byzantium, Sicily, Ireland, the Kingdom of Lombardy, and the court of Karl the Great, that the type is persistent, and lasts with little real alteration from the earliest times till it hands on the traditional form to mediaeval art. The oldest scenes simply represent the idea of baptism; the slight modification of the fourth century is due to elaboration borrowed from liturgical custom; and the more marked influence of Ravenna, Syria, and Byzantium is due to an attempt to secure historic realism. As far as there is any development in the actual mode of administration it is towards submersion, but the furthest step in that direction consists in representing the water as rising (in most cases miraculously) as high as the neck.

On the other hand:—

Illustrations of what probably indicates immersion are found in two pontificals attributed to the ninth century, one in the Minerva Library at Rome (Kraus, *Realencyclopädie*, art. 'Taufe' p. 838), and one in the Library at Windsor. Both are reproduced in Smith's *Dictionary of Antiquities*, art. 'Baptism,' § 43. In both cases it is an infant that is about to be dipped, and in the latter a priest in alb and stole administers the rite while a bishop in chasuble and stole descends from

his desk and prepares to anoint the child. A similar scene occurs on the ivory book-cover of the Sacramentary of Drogo at Metz (ninth century), where eighteen liturgical and other scenes are represented. In the eighth the water in a small font under a canopy is being consecrated, while in the ninth two small children are being dipped. Another scene shows the baptism of Christ represented in the traditional manner, with Jordan and the attendant angels (Figs. 50 and 51)[1].

Fig. 50 (from a cast).

Fig. 51.

We have seen then that all the evidence of archaeology goes to prove that the essential part of baptism was considered in the early Church to be the pouring of water over the candidate's head by the bishop, or the guiding his head under a descending stream, followed by the laying on of hands. There remains the question, whether this was preceded by a self-immersion, for a bishop could not have actually dipped a grown man: such an act might conceivably have taken place and yet not be represented, just as the anointing that undoubtedly followed does not appear in any of the examples we have examined that date from before the eighth century.

To answer this question we must consider the evidence of early Christian baptisteries.

[1] Westwood, No. 295.—Kraus, F. K., *Kunst und Alterthum in Elsass-Lothringen*, iii, 575.—*Geschichte*, ii, p. 16.

CHAPTER IV

BAPTISM WITHOUT A FONT

Baptism in Apostolic times.

Baptism in apostolic times was no doubt administered without any special font or building being set apart for the purpose. The 3,000 converts at Jerusalem (Acts ii. 41), the jailor at Philippi (xvi. 33), S. Paul at Damascus (ix. 18), the disciples at Ephesus (xix. 5), may have been baptized in some sort of bath, but it is difficult to imagine how the rite could have been carried out by submersion.

The eunuch of queen Candace was baptized in the open air (viii. 38), and the baptism of Lydia and her household (xvi. 15) may have taken place in the river near the place of prayer where she met S. Paul. Tertullian declares (*De Bapt.* 4) that S. Peter baptized in the Tiber, and he evidently contemplated the possibility of open-air baptism in his own day (c. 200).

> Ideoque nulla distinctio est, mari quis an stagno flumine an fonte, lacu an alveo diluatur; nec quicquam refert inter eos, quos Ioannes in Iordane et quos Petrus in Tiberi tinxit, nisi et ille spado, quem Philippus inter vias fortuita aqua tinxit, plus salutis aut minus retulit.

The place of Christ's baptism.

The custom of open-air baptizing in the Jordan district continued at least as late as the fifth century. We have seen how such a scene of open-air baptism was interpreted in art, in the representations of our Lord's baptism. The natural features of the Holy Land, as well as local tradition, still further support this interpretation as being correct in the point we are considering, viz. the depth of the water.

'At the foot of the hills there burst forth all the summer, not only such springs as we have in our own land, but large and copious fountains from three to twenty feet in breadth and *from one to three in depth*, with broad pools of fish, and some sending forth streams strong enough to work mills a few yards away. These fountain-heads, as they are called, are very characteristic features of the Syrian summer[1].'

Sylvia of Aquitaine (385–388) describes the traditional spot as she saw it. The spring had a sort of pool in front where it was supposed S. John had baptized, and she was told that to that day the Easter baptisms for the candidates of that district took place in the same spot[2].

Tunc ergo quia retinebam scriptum esse baptizasse sanctum Iohannem inEnon iuxta Salim requisivi de eo quam longe esset ipse locus. Tunc ait ille sanctus presbiter; ecce hic est in ducentis passibus; nam si vis ecce modo pedibus duco vos ibi. Nam haec aqua tam grandis et tam pura quam videtis in isto vico de ipso fonte venit. Tunc ergo gratias ei agere coepi et rogare ut duceret nos ad locum, sicut et factum est. Statim ergo coepimus ire cum eo pedibus totum per vallem amenissimam donec perveniremus usque ad hortum pomarium valde amenum, ubi ostendit nobis in medio fontem aquae optimae satis et pure, quia semel integrum fluvium demittebat. Habebat autem ante se ipse fons quasi lacum ubi parebat fuisse operatum sanctum Iohannem baptistam. Tunc dixit nobis ipse sanctus presbiter, in hodie hic hortus aliter non appellatur Greco sermone nisi copostu agiu iohanni, id est quod vos dicitis latine hortus sancti Iohannis. Nam et multi fratres sancti monachi de diversis locis venientes tendunt se ut laventur in eo loco. Denuo ergo et ad ipsum fontem sicut et in singulis locis facta est oratio et lecta est ipsa lectio, dictus etiam psalmus competens, singula et quae consuetudinis nobis erat ubicunque ad loca sancta veniebamus ita et ibi fecimus. Illud etiam presbiter sanctus dixit nobis, eo quod usque in hodierna die semper cata pascha quicumque essent baptizandi in ipso vico id est in ecclesia

[1] Smith, G. A., *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 77; of the many pools or streams of Aenon (πολλὰ ὕδατα), John iii. 23.

[2] *Peregrinatio Silviae*, ed. Gamurrini, ch. 45, p. 59.

que appellatur opu Melchisidech omnes in ipso fonte baptizarentur.

The place was also known to Eusebius (265–340).

Jerome in Eus. De situ et nominibus, 163, Migne, *Patr. Lat.* tom. xxiii. p. 677 (Aenon juxta Salim ubi baptizabat Iohannes sicut in Evangelio cata Iohannem scriptum est et ostenditur nunc usque locus in octavo lapide Scythopoleos ad meridiem iuxta Salim et Iordanem); but he seems to place the scene of our Lord's baptism at Bethabara and mentions the custom of Christian baptism in the river (182, p. 884).

In later times the baptism was believed to have taken place at Bethabara in the river itself, and a cross was erected in the water to mark the spot. Antoninus Placentius (570–600) describes it as surrounded by marble steps by which it was possible to go down into the water. The legend further added that the water rolled back to allow the Saviour to stand on dry ground.

Legends of the Apostolic Age.

The Acts of Xantippe, Polyxena, and Rebecca are a Gnostic work dating probably from the third century, but using the Acts of Paul, which are most likely of the second, and are considered by Zahn to be orthodox.

Polyxena is described as meeting S. Andrew in a wood and asking him for baptism. He replies, 'Let us go, my child, where there is water.'

They come to a spring where they meet Rebecca, a Jewess, coming to draw, and a lion appears who tells the apostle to baptize them, which he does in the name of the Trinity.

The story of the lion reappears in the Acts of Paul and Thecla, and it is this legend that Jerome alludes to when he speaks with contempt of the work with its story of a baptized lion (baptizati leonis fabulam, *De vir. illust.* ch. 7)[1].

In the Clementine Homilies (*Hom.* xiv. 1) Mattidia is described as being baptized on the sea-shore between some

[1] James, M. R., *Texts and Studies*, vol. ii, no. 3, pp. 43–85, Cambridge, 1897.

rocks. A river or spring where there is living water is mentioned as a suitable place for baptism in Clem. Hom. *Contest.* ch. i; cf. *Hom.* xi. 26[1].

In the Acts of Linus the story is told of how S. Peter, when imprisoned in the Tullianum (Mamertine prison) under the Capitol, converted his two jailors Processus and Martinianus, and after causing a spring to burst forth baptized them and forty-seven others. The Acts date from the middle of the fourth century, and were probably taken from an earlier Greek form (G. Salmon in *Dict. Christian Biography*, art. 'Linus'). The saints are commemorated on July 2 in the Roman Breviary, and the story forms part of the lessons of the third nocturn. The spring about which the story grew up is still shown. The Tullianum was originally built as a well-house over this spring, having the usual dome form that is characteristic of the earliest buildings of Italy. The present floor of the upper chamber dates from early republican times, but the lower room was still in use in the fifth century A.D. A small circular hole forms the well-mouth, in which there is a constant supply of water. The forty-nine people could not easily have got into a room only 6 metres in diameter; still less could they have been dipped in the well. Doubts have been cast on the Roman origin of the legend on this ground[2].

Grisar considers the tradition is not earlier than the sixth century, as the building remained a prison in Christian times and was only converted into an oratory in the fifteenth.

Legends of the Ages of Persecution.

The Armenian Acts of Phocas, telling a story of persecution in the time of Trajan (which has however been added to later), describe the bishop as baptizing some soldiers in the sea[3].

[1] *Clementis Romani Homiliae Viginti*, ed. Dressel, 1853, pp. 296, 6, 247.

[2] Grisar, H., 'Der Mamertinische Kerker,' in the *Zeitschrift für kath. Theologie*, 1896, p. 102.—Lanciani, R., *The Ruins and Excavations of ancient Rome*, London, 1897, p. 287.

[3] Conybeare, F. C., *The Apology and Acts of Apollonius*, &c., 1894, ch. xvi, p. 118.

'When the soldiers saw it (a torch, Gr. version 'more than ten thousand lamps') they rushed in, and throwing themselves at his feet sought of him the washing of the font—and the blessed bishop took the men and went as far as the edge of the sea outside the city and gave them the seal in Christ.' Cf. *Acta Sanctorum*, July 14, vol. iii, p. 644.

Victor of Marseilles is said to have baptized in the sea at the end of the third century (Ruinart, *Acta Sincera*, '*S. Victor Massil.*').

S. Apollinaris is said to have baptized in a house as well as in the sea and in a river at Ravenna (Surius, *Vit. Sanct.* July 23, §§ 2, 4, 11).

In the Acts of S. Laurence we read how the saint baptized Lucillus, a fellow prisoner, by pouring water over his head. Hippolytus his jailor was baptized with nineteen others in his own house and it would seem by the same method, though the Acts speak of his being 'raised out of the water,' from which we gather he stood in some bath or vessel. After he had been brought before Decius, one of the soldiers named Romanus, who had guarded him and had seen him tortured, was converted by a vision of Christ wiping his limbs. So the next day he brought a pitcher of water and cast himself at the feet of the saint, who took the water from him and gave him the baptism he desired.

Surius, *Vit. Sanct.* Aug. 10, §§ 16, 17, 21. Tum beatus Laurentius catechizavit Lucillum et accepta aqua dixit ad eum: Omnia in confessione lavantur. Tu autem me pronunciante responde 'Credo.' Benedixitque aquam et cum expoliasset eum fudit super caput eius dicens, &c.

. . . deinde more solito catechizavit eum, acceptamque aquam benedixit et baptizavit eum . . . et cum eum ex aqua elevaret . . . et praeclare baptizati sunt in domo . . . Porro Romanus urceum afferens cum aqua opportunitatem captabat . . . accessit et aquam afferens, misit se ad pedes beati Laurentii rogavitque cum lacrymis ut baptizaretur. Et acceptam aquam benedixit et baptizavit eum.

This incident is referred to by Walafrid Strabo (849).

In the Acts of Pope Marcellus, a deacon named Sisinius baptizes a certain Apronianus, who was sent to conduct him to the prefect Laodicius. When they are both committed to prison they are described as baptizing numbers who visited them there.

The baptism of Apronianus, according to the story, took place in a basin within the house; and in a later form of the Acts it is narrated in similar words how the deacon Cyriacus baptized a Persian princess in a silver bath (cp. the tombstone from Aquileia, Ex. 23, Fig. 21). The place where he had erected a baptistery in his own house was afterwards, during the persecution of Diocletian, turned into a bath by a pagan named Carpasius.

> Eadem hora allata est aqua et catechizavit eum et benedixit fontem et deposuit eum nudum in pelvim dicens &c. . . . et elevavit eum de pelvi et duxit eum ad Sanctum Marcellum.
>
> Cumque essent in custodia veniebant ad eos multi Gentiles et baptizabantur cum omni fiducia[1].
>
> Catechizavit eam et allata aqua deposuit eam nudam in concham argenteam. . . . Cum vidisset Carpasius placatum sibi Maximinianum, petiit ab eo domum beati Cyriaci, qui confestim, quod petebatur, ei concessit. Et cum introisset in eandem domum, quam donaverat B. Cyriaco Diocletianus Augustus, invenit locum ubi S. Cyriacus fontem aedificavit, quem consecravit beatus Marcellus episcopus, ubi frequenter baptizabat S. Cyriacus venientes ad fidem. Tunc Carpasius vicarius paganus crudelissimus, cum in eadem domo invenisset baptisterium, fecit in loco eodem balneum, quasi ad deridendam legem christianorum[2]. Cf. Augusti, *Denkwürdigkeiten aus der christlichen Archäologie*, vol. 7, pp. 187, 189, 225.
>
> The Acts in their present form seem to be of the fifth or sixth century, though they are based on an earlier tradition. Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.* vol. i, pp. xcix and 165.

Baptism in Special Circumstances.

A legend of the Diocletian persecution told in the spurious Acts of Peter of Alexandria narrates how a woman in a storm

[1] *Gesta Marcelli Papae. Surii vit. Sanct.*, Jan. 16, § 3, 5, p. 334.
[2] *Acta Sanctorum, Boll.*, Jan. 16, vol. ii, §§ 16, 23, p. 7.

at sea baptized her child with blood drawn from her breast, and that when she brought it afterwards to the font, the water turned to stone to prevent the repetition of the sacrament.

A tradition of the end of the fourth century relates that S. Athanasius when a boy conferred baptism in play on some children on the sea-shore at Alexandria. He was observed by the Bishop Alexander, who, having ascertained that the necessary questions had been duly answered and the water poured over them (*infusa*), declared the rite was not to be repeated, but that it only needed completion.

> Rufinus, *H. E.* bk. i. ch. 14. Videt eminus puerorum super oram maris ludum imitantium . . . statuisse traditur illis quibus integris interrogationibus et responsionibus aqua fuerat infusa iterari baptismum non debere sed adimpleri.

A story is told by Johannes Moschus (620) which he heard from a certain abbot Andrew. He said that as a young man he was very unsettled (ἄτακτος πάνυ, *indisciplinatus valde et inquietus fui*) and that he fled into the desert of Palestine with nine others, of whom one was called Philoponos and one was a Jew. The Jew fell ill, and though for some time refusing to desert him, they at last saw it was necessary unless they were all to die of thirst. The Jew begged for baptism, but they demurred, as there was no bishop or presbyter among them, and besides there was no water. Philoponos, however, told them to strip him and set him on his feet, which they did with some difficulty. Then filling his hands with sand he poured it thrice on his head, saying, 'Theodore is baptized,' &c. The Jew was at once healed, and on returning to Ascalon he went to Dionysius the bishop, who called his clergy together to discuss the validity of such a baptism. Some argued that it was valid, as it had been confirmed by a miracle; others said that though Moses baptized in water, in the cloud and in the sea, John in penitence, and Jesus in the spirit, and though Gregory of Nazianzen mentioned the baptism of blood and that of tears, no mention was made of sand; so the bishop thought it best to take him to the Jordan and baptize him

there, making Philoponos a deacon. No one, however, seems to have objected to the baptism on the ground that he had not been totally immersed in the sand[1].

> Καὶ μετὰ πολλοῦ κόπου ὄρθιον αὐτὸν στήσαντες ἐξεδύσαμεν. ὁ δὲ Φιλόπονος πληρώσας ψάμμου τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τρὶς κατέχεεν αὐτοῦ τῇ κεφαλῇ λέγων κ.τ.λ.

In all the above cases of baptism administered in the ages of persecution, or under special circumstances, we have seen that submersion could not have been practised, and yet there is no trace of justification of the method adopted as though it were unusual or as if excuse were necessary.

Clinical Baptism.

The objection to the clinical baptism of Novatian (Eus. *H. E.* vi. 43) was not that he had not been dipped, but that he had only sought the rite on his sick bed in fear of death, and that he had never made up for the supposed necessity of such an act by seeking the seal of the bishop according to the rule of the Church. No stress is laid on the word 'by pouring' (περιχυθείς), but further instances of his cowardice are given immediately after.

So Cyprian (Ep. 76, Migne, *Patr. Lat.* vol. iii, p. 1147), after arguing that baptism out of the church is invalid, goes on to answer the objections of those who considered that persons who had been baptized in sickness ought not to be called Christians, but clinics, on the ground that they were not washed but sprinkled (*non loti sunt sed perfusi*). He says it is not as if it were an actual bath, and there were need of salt of nitre (*aphronitrum*) and a seat (*solium*) to sit on while washing yourself. He quotes Ezek. xxxvi. 25, Numb. xix. 8, 12, 13, viii. 6–7, and xix. 9, and argues that aspersion is allowable if faith is sound; but throughout, the contrast, as far as it refers to the method of administration, is between sprinkling and pouring over the whole body, while the sole objection to

[1] Johannes Moschus, *Pratum Spirituale*, ch. 176, Migne, lxxxvii, pars iii, p. 3043.

clinical baptism in his eyes is that it does not take place in the presence of the Church.

> Nec quemquam movere debet quod aspergi vel perfundi videntur aegri cum gratiam dominicam consequuntur. . . . Unde apparet aspersionem quoque aquae instar salutaris lavacri obtinere et quando haec in Ecclesia fiunt, ubi sit et accipientis et dantis fides integra, stare omnia et consummari ac perfici posse maiestate Domini et fidei veritate.

The synod of Neocaesarea (314–325) forbade the ordaining of persons baptized in sickness, on the ground that their acceptance of the faith had been forced on them by circumstances. The rule was only to be relaxed if on recovery they showed a special zeal, or if (an unfortunate alternative) there was a lack of candidates for Holy Orders.

> Ἐὰν νοσῶν τις φωτισθῇ, εἰς πρεσβύτερον ἄγεσθαι οὐ δύναται . . . οὐκ ἐκ προαιρέσεως γὰρ ἡ πίστις αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἀνάγκης . . . εἰ μὴ τάχα διὰ τὴν μετὰ ταῦτα αὐτοῦ σπουδὴν καὶ πίστιν καὶ διὰ σπάνιν ἀνθρώπων[1].

Affusion in Church Orders.

In the *Didaché* it is considered the natural thing, if there is no suitable tank with running or other water for the candidate to stand in while the water is poured over his whole body, that it should be simply poured over his head alone, that being considered the only essential part of the ceremony. In the Canons of Hippolytus the presbyter is directed to keep his hand on the catechumen's head while he is being baptized, an injunction which would seem to preclude the idea of dipping, as the water in which both presbyter and catechumen stand is obviously shallow. (Haneberg, *Canon* 19. 125: 'tum prima vice immergitur aquae, dum ille manum capiti eius impositam relinquit.') In the later so-called Canons of Basil we find that submersion has come to be considered the better way, though three handfuls of water poured over the head and body are held sufficient as an alternative.

> Findet man nichts, worin man untertauchen kann, soll er im Namen der Dreiheit drei Hände voll Wasser auf sein Haupt

[1] Conc. Neocaes. can. xii, Hefele, vol. 1, § 17.

erhalten, und er soll Wasser auf sein Haupt und seinen ganzen Körper giessen und ihn baden[1].

One would like to know, however, what was the original Greek word, and whether possibly the idea of submersion has not been due to either the Arabic or the Coptic translator through whose hands the Canons seem to have passed in turn, and whether in the earliest form the two alternatives were not simply those of the *Didaché*.

Baptism in Private Houses.

In the earliest times, however, open-air baptism must have been the exception, as such a ceremony could hardly fail to attract attention. Before the conversion of Constantine Christian worship could only be carried on in private houses (*domus ecclesiae*), where the wealth of the owner formed a protection, or in the catacombs, where probably as early as the second century the Church had a legal position as a burial guild; and it is only natural to suppose that baptism, which was followed immediately by the Communion, was conferred in the same places[2].

In private houses the rite could only have been administered in the impluvium, in the middle of the atrium, or in a bath-room. The atrium of a house was semi-public, and all evidence seems to show that Christians met in the inner peristylum. The arrangements of later churches in the West long continued to follow that of the private house, the catechumens being confined to the more public outer court, where the fountain served for the ablutions of the faithful. Bernini's colonnade before S. Peter's at Rome, with its two fountains, is the seventeenth-century development of the old court of Constantine's building in which Symmachus set up the pine-cone fountain now in the Giardino della Pigna of the Vatican.

[1] Riedel, W., *Die Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien*, Leipzig, 1900, p. 282, canon 105.

[2] Lightfoot, J. B., *Historical Essays*, pp. 61–2.—Ramsay, W. M., *The Church in the Roman Empire*, London, 1893.

Examples of baths in private houses can still be seen in the house of Germanicus on the Palatine and in that of the Vestals in the Forum. They lie to the right of the tablinum, in the more private quarters of the house, but in neither of them nor in the more public impluvium would submersion have been possible.

In the bath described by Pliny (bk. v. ep. 6) there was a piscina deep enough to swim in, but it is noticeable that the basin described as a 'baptisterium,' though a large one, was not of sufficient depth for that purpose.

> Inde apodyterium balinei laxum et hilare excipit cella frigidaria in qua baptisterium amplum atque opacum. Si natare latius aut tepidius velis in area piscina est; in proximo puteus ex quo possis rursus astringi, si poeniteat teporis. Cf. also Bk. ii. ep. 17. Inde balinei cella frigidaria spatiosa et effusa cuius in contrariis parietibus duo baptisteria velut eiecta sinuantur abunde capacia si mare in proximo cogites.

Baptism in private houses lasted as late as the sixth century. We read that it was forbidden, except in cases of necessity, in 527 at the Council of Dovin in Armenia (Can. 16; Hefele, vol. iii. § 240), and at the Council 'in Trullo' (Quinisext) at Constantinople in 692 it was forbidden, except with the consent of the bishop (Can. 31, vol. iv. § 327).

CHAPTER V

THE FONT IN THE EAST

Fonts in Egypt.

Egypt was probably the first country to develop a distinctively Christian Art, just as she became early famous for her literature and her catechetical school, and this art seems to have continued with but little influence from outside. The dome building-form is almost universally found, and shows no sign of being modified by the Byzantine evolution that produced S. Sophia or by the basilica development of Rome, while at the same time the tradition of a domestic architecture lasted long, especially in the disposition of monastic buildings[1].

This is seen in the usual shape and position of the font. Every Coptic church has what is called the Epiphany tank, usually about 8 or 10 feet by 6, and 5 or 6 feet deep. This, says Butler, 'it is reasonable to suppose was used for immersion, as it stands in the narthex, but there is no distinct evidence or tradition that it was so.' It seems rather to be the Egyptian form of the fountain that developed from the impluvium of the Roman house as described above. Just as in the West it was used for ablutions, and after being brought inside the church dwindled down to the holy water stoup, so the Egyptian churches have a second form, generally about 2 feet by one, placed at the west of the nave and used for the *mandatum* and ablutions.

The font, on the other hand, is found in various positions near the sanctuary, as the bath-room would have been in the inner part of the house. It is described as 'a deep circular

[1] Butler, A. J., *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, Oxford, 1884.—Schultze, V., *Archäologie der christlichen Kunst*, p. 115.

basin like our modern fonts, though there is no trace of separate circular or hexagonal baptisteries' (Butler, pp. 22, 41).

Ex. 61. *Dair Mâri Mîna. ? Fourth century.*

Thus at Dair Mâri Mîna, between old and new Cairo, there is a small font to the south of the apse at the east end. The church was restored in 730, but this part is considered to belong to the original fourth-century building (pp. 62, 73).

Ex. 62. *Dair Abu' 's Sifain. ? Tenth century.*

At Dair Abu' 's Sifain are two fonts consisting of large basins built up into the masonry. One has a square enlargement east and west, at the bottom of which are two steps 'obviously adapted for immersion,' though the font itself is not more than 4 feet in depth, and apparently only about 3 feet in diameter; the size of the other at the end of the south aisle is about the same, and the depth 3 feet (p. 117). The building of the church is ascribed to Christodulus (1060), but it is probably earlier, and was built or rebuilt in 927.

Three more dating from the seventh or eighth century are mentioned as existing at the churches of Anba Shanûda, Mari Girgis, and Sit Miriam at Abu' 's Sifain in the usual position, but no measurements are given (pp. 138 and 144).

Ex. 63. *Abu Sargah. Third or sixth century.*

At the church of Abu Sargah in old Cairo, an eighth-century building with a sixth-century crypt, is a round font imbedded in masonry of a diameter of 2 feet, while in the crypt is a round stone vessel 30 inches across, which it is suggested is part of the original second or third-century building that was remade in the sixth (plan, pp. 201 and 203).

Ex. 64. *Dair al Abiad. Third or fourth century.*

At Dair al Abiad, the white monastery (Anba Shanûda) dating from the third or fourth century, is a small chapel on

the south side of the narthex which was probably a baptistery, and was described by V. Denon in 1799 as 'containing a magnificent font for immersion'; from the plan (fig. 26) in Butler it was about 4 feet in diameter. The basin seems to have been sunk in a platform of masonry which was ascended by a short flight of steps (pp. 17, 354 and vol. ii, p. 265).

On page 43 the author mentions the font at Dair Abu' 's Sifain as a 'very early font, which differs from the others in being deeper and having on each side of the well a short flight of steps; in other words, it is adapted more for immersion than sprinkling.' The steps, however, are elsewhere described as only two in number, and the church dating from the tenth century makes this example of *later* origin than any of the others cited; but even in this *larger* type of *late* font it would be impossible to 'immerse' any but a very undersized man, though we need not therefore assume that the modern custom of sprinkling was substituted for affusion.

Ex. 65. *Al' Adra.*

At the little church by the cathedral of Al' Adra is a font described as standing in a recess 3 feet deep, in the form of a deep round basin with a rim curving out and fluted sides. The room is described as tiny and the church as little altered from the day of its dedication, and probably one of the oldest in Egypt (p. 226).

Legends of miraculous fonts.

Johannes Moschus (620) mentions a miraculous font (φώτισμα) which he says existed at Cedrebatis, and which filled itself on the eve of Easter and remained full till Whitsuntide. The font is described as consisting of one block (μονόλιθον ὄν), from which we see that the type with which he was familiar must have been about the size of those described above[1].

A similar story is told by Gregory of Tours (sixth century) of a font in Lusitania, which seems to have been of a cruciform

[1] *Pratum Spirituale*, Migne, *Patr. Graeco-Lat.*, lxxxvii, pars iii, p. 3107.

shape, forming an exception to the usual rule in the West where, as we shall see, the basins are generally circular or octagonal. He relates that, though the doors of the baptistery were sealed on Thursday in Holy Week, when they were opened on Saturday the font was not only found full, but the water was piled up like a heap of corn, and that it stayed so until every one had drawn away all that was required for their fields or their homes, but that as soon as the first baptism took place in it it shrank back, and disappeared when all had received the sacrament. The water rose miraculously for the convenience of those who wished to draw from it, but there was no need to rise to cover the bodies of the catechumens.

> Piscina namque est apud Osen campum antiquitus sculpta et ex marmore vario in modum crucis miro composita opere. Sed et aedes magnae claritatis et celsitudinis desuper a christianis constructa est. . . Ac mirum dictu, piscinam quam reliquerant vacuam reperiunt plenam, et ita cumulo altiore refertam ut solet super ora modiorum triticum aggregari, videasque huc illucque latices fluctuare nec partem in diversam defluere . . . licet ubi infans primus intinctus fuerit, mox aqua reducitur et baptizatis omnibus lymphis in se reversis ut initio produntur nescio ita ut fine clauduntur ignaro [1].

The same legend reappears in the description of the scene of our Lord's baptism by the pilgrim Antoninus Placentius (570–600), where, however, the miracle is described as taking place on the night of the festival of the Epiphany. It seems also to be referred to by Theodosius (530) some years earlier.

Syrian and Egyptian Church Orders.

It is impossible to say with certainty whether the Canons of Hippolytus (third century) contemplate the use of a special font for baptism. They survive only in an Arabic version, and are generally quoted in the Latin translation published by H. Achelis in the Leipzig *Texte und Untersuchungen*,

[1] Greg. Tur., *De Glor. mart.*, i. 24, Migne, *Patr. Lat.*, lxxi, p. 725.

vol. vi, 1891, or in that of D. B. von Haneberg (München 1870).

In the former, Canon 19, § 112 orders the catechumens to assemble at cockcrow by a current of water of a 'baḥr,' pure, prepared and holy (prope fluctuantem aquam maris puram, paratam, sacram). This, Achelis seems to consider, contemplates the administration of the rite in sea-water.

Von Haneberg, on the other hand, believes it may refer either to open-air baptism in a river or to a font, and in the introduction to his edition of the Canons inclines to the latter interpretation.

F. C. Burkitt in a note in the *Journal of Theological Studies*, 1900, p. 279, considers that the passage cannot refer to the sea, as the word 'baḥr' is without the article, nor does he think it can be applied to a piece of ecclesiastical furniture like the 'sea' in Solomon's temple, because the Arabic word 'tayyâr' signifies not so much 'waves' as the current of a stream. He holds that in Canon 29, § 213, where the dust of the sanctuary is ordered to be thrown into the water of a 'baḥr tayyâr' (in aquam maris undosi), a running stream must be implied as in the ritual enjoined in Lev. xiv. 5, 50. He would prefer therefore to translate 'let them assemble at cockcrow by the water, a running stream pure, prepared, and holy.' W. Riedel, in the translation of the Canons in his *Kirchenrechtsquellen des Patriarchats Alexandrien*, agrees with him, and renders the passage 'das Wasser eines reinen brausenden Flusses' (p. 211).

It is evident that the Arabic translator did not understand the words before him in the original, so for its interpretation we must rely on internal evidence and on parallel passages in other Church Orders. The service as described in the Canons clearly takes place in a church (§§ 135, 142, &c.), and it is more natural to suppose that the order to throw the dust of the sanctuary into a running stream would refer to a fountain of running water within the precincts of the building. The killing of the bird, in Lev. xiv. 6, seems to take place at the

tent of meeting, and in verse 50 the running water seems to be within the house that is to be purified. All this suggests that a font is meant in the Canon.

This is further borne out by the parallel passages in allied Church Orders. The Egyptian Heptateuch, first published by H. Tattam in 1848, is given thus in his translation from the Bohairic dialect (§ 46, p. 54):—'And at the time of the cock-crowing let them first pray over the water. Let the water be drawn into the font or flowing into it, and let it be thus if there be no scarcity. But if there be a scarcity, let them pour the water which shall be found into the font, and let them undress themselves,' &c. The Sahidic version in Lagarde, *Aegyptiaca*, Can. Ecclesiast. No. 46, p. 255, has the same words, but adds 'and haste' after the word translated 'scarcity,' and continues 'use what water can be found.'

The Verona Latin fragment is defective, but the Ethiopic statutes contain the same directions:—'At the time of cock-crow let them pray first over the water, whether it was such as flowed into the tank or was caused to flow into it. If there was difficulty let him pour water which has been drawn' (from a well); and the Arabic statutes (MS. Vat. § 34) say:—'At the time of cockcrow let him pray first over the water, and let the water be either running to the tank or running upon it. Let it be thus unless there was urgent necessity; if there was constraint let him pour in water which is found[1].'

So in the Syrian 'Testament of our Lord' (? fourth cent.) in which a baptistery is specially mentioned, we find it ordered that the water is to be pure and running (hoc autem modo baptizentur dum accedunt ad aquas quae debent esse mundae et fluentes)[2].

These documents are based on a lost Church Order originating probably in Syria in the second century. They seem

[1] I am indebted to the Rev. G. Horner for the above two unpublished quotations.

[2] *Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, ed. I. E. Rahmani, Mainz, 1899, bk. ii.

to show that baptism took place, not in the open air, but in a vessel within doors, and preferably in one that had a continuous stream running into it to keep it fresh. Such basins would naturally be erected in churches, but where no such fountain was available, water might be brought in and poured over the head of the catechumen.

This explains the passage in the Didache which has generally been interpreted as referring to open-air baptism:—'Baptize . . . in living water. But if thou hast not living water, baptize in other water, and if thou canst not in cold then in warm. And if thou have not either, pour water thrice upon the head,' &c.

> *οὕτω βαπτίσατε . . . ἐν ὕδατι ζῶντι. Ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἔχῃς ὕδωρ ζῶν, εἰς ἄλλο ὕδωρ βάπτισον· εἰ δ' οὐ δύνασαι ἐν ψυχρῷ, ἐν θερμῷ. Ἐὰν δὲ ἀμφότερα μὴ ἔχῃς, ἔκχεον εἰς τὴν κεφαλὴν τρὶς ὕδωρ κ.τ.λ.*

The natural place for the rite to be administered would be indoors, preferably in a fountain with running water; but, failing this, any tank or warm bath might be used. If no basin were at hand of sufficient size to allow the catechumen to stand in it while the water was poured over his body, it was enough if it were poured thrice over his head.

Fonts in Syria.

Christianity spread rapidly in very early times in Syria. From Jerusalem it passed to the lowlands of Palestine, whence in the persecutions of Decius and Diocletian it sent a continuous stream of martyrs to Caesarea (Eus. *H. E.* bk. VIII). Flourishing communities existed from earliest times in the great cities of Antioch, Edessa, and Damascus, but no remains of their churches have survived, except at Tyre and Jerusalem. On the other hand, numerous traces of the Christianity of the smaller towns and villages have been discovered, especially of that which followed the Roman civilizing of the Hauran in the second century; and though the Diocletian persecution

seems to have swept away such buildings as may have then existed, there are considerable remains of the fourth and fifth-century churches with certain strongly marked architectural features. The latest are of the middle of the seventh century, while after the capture of Damascus by the Mohammedans in 635, only one single church is known to have been built in ancient times.

Ex. 66. *Tyre*, 314.

The cathedral at Tyre was built by Bp. Paulinus in 314, and is described by Eusebius in his sermon on the occasion of its dedication, preserved in his Ecclesiastical History (bk. X, ch. 4). It was evidently considered an event of great importance at the time, since it was the first large church that had been built, and signalized the final triumph of Christianity. He mentions the fountain (κρῆναι) for washing the hands that stood in the atrium, and also alludes to adjoining buildings (ἐξέδρας καὶ οἴκους) joined to the side (εἰς πλευρά) of the basilica and united with the entrances into the centre of the structure (ταῖς ἐπὶ τὸν μέσον οἶκον εἰσβολαῖς ἡνωμένους), for those 'who still require the purification and sprinkling (περιρραντηρίων) of water and the Holy Spirit.'

It is much to be regretted that his description is so vague, and the remains of the church so scanty. Erected at that particular time it must have preserved the traditions of the previous century, and shown what Christians would have wished to build in the days of persecution had they been able; while it also formed a link with later times in that it probably set the example which the churches of the fourth century followed, and became the starting-point of the whole development in church building in post-Constantinian times.

The ruins of the cathedral were explored by Dr. S. N. Sepp in 1845, when he reported that he discovered the old font in the left aisle, and it is marked in this position in his plan (*Meerfahrt nach Tyrus*, Leipzig, 1879, p. 217). In his description of the alterations and rebuilding of the thirteenth

century, a font of the same shape is referred to as standing on the right hand of the nave near the altar.

In 1874, however, he excavated one of the adjoining buildings, and there discovered 'a basin in the form of a drawn out cross with three' (four in the diagram) 'steps at each end' (Fig. 52). It seems to have been used later for burial purposes, and fragments of an altar and a sarcophagus ornamented with fairly good classical decoration were found near, pointing to a date in the fourth century. This seems to have been the same font as that which he discovered in 1845, but it had been broken in the meanwhile.

Fig. 52.

The actual basin is oblong, with extensions at either end for the steps. The depth is 2½ feet and the length 6 feet (? without the extensions), the breadth is not stated. The draw-hole is marked in the plan.

Dr. Sepp considers this to be the original font, and, after describing it as probably the oldest basin for 'immersion' that exists, adds that from its slight depth it could not have served for adults, and therefore proves that infant baptism was practised from earliest times! He does not suggest where the adults could have been baptized, or the purpose of the steps if the font was only used for infants.

Dr. Sepp also describes a spring in a rock chamber with a yard depth of water (*ellenhoch*), which he identifies with the source of the fountain in the atrium of which Eusebius speaks.

The baptistery occupies a similar position in the description of a church given in ch. 19 of the 'Testament of our Lord,' a Church Order dating in its present form probably from the fourth century, but based upon an earlier work. No description of the font, however, is given.

> Intra atrium sit aedes baptisterii habens longitudinem viginti et unius cubitorum, ad praefigurandum numerum completum

prophetarum, et latitudinem duodecim cubitorum pro adumbrandis iis, qui constituti fuerunt ad praedicandum evangelium. Aditus sit unus, exitus vero sint tres.

Velum ex bysso pura confectum habeat altare, quoniam est immaculatum. Similiter domus baptismi [i. e. baptisterium] sit velo obtecta [1].

Ex. 67. Amwas. Fourth century.

A fourth-century baptistery was discovered in 1884 at Amwas (Emmaus) by Dr. C. Schick, containing a font in remarkable preservation. The building is square with an apse, in the middle of the chord of which lies a cruciform basin with rounded ends (Fig. 53). The area of the apse where the bishop would have stood is raised to a level with the rim of the basin, which is only half sunk in the ground. Two steps lead into it on the west side. On each side are shallow depressions in the floor, connected with the basin by a drain which pierces its side. These were possibly the places where the newly baptized stood to receive unction, and were constructed to carry back the water that ran from their bodies. No accurate measurements were taken, but the following are approximate—breadth 3·5 metres, depth 1·35 metre.

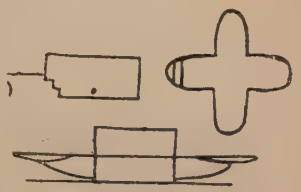

Fig. 53.

Taking into account the fact that the basin is half sunk in the level of the floor in which these curious depressions are made, the water in it could never have been more than about half a metre deep, or it would have run off through the drains and covered the floor of the baptistery [2].

[1] *Testamentum Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, ed. Rahmani, Mainz, 1899.

[2] Schick, C., in *Zeitschrift d. Deutschen Palästina-Vereins*, Bd. vii, 1884, p. 15, with a picture.

Ex. 68. *Beit 'Aûwa. ? Fourth century.*

A font was discovered in 1875 at Beit 'Aûwa, near Hebron, in a 'Byzantine building' (Fig. 54). 'In the centre is a square basin, side 2 feet 3 in., 7 in. deep, four steps lead down' (i.e. two structural steps, as appears from the plan) '5 in. high, 9 in. broad (i.e. the total depth 20 in.), the whole surrounded by four segmental recesses, the external form being that of a rounded cross; the longest measurement being 5½ feet, the total height outside 2 feet 4 in.'

The font is described as 'fitted for immersion.' Evidently there were none of the descendants of the Anakim surviving[1].

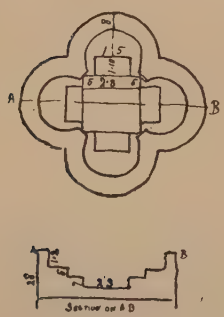

Fig. 54.

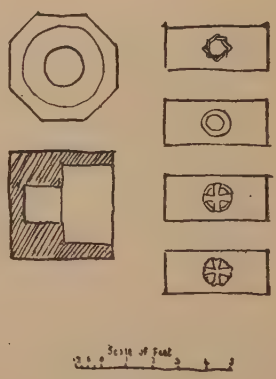

Fig. 55.

Ex. 68 *a.*

Another at Khŭrbet Tekûa, south of Bethlehem, is described as octagonal, 4 feet high, 4 feet 3 in. in diameter (Fig. 55). The plan shows only one step[2].

Ex. 69. *Deir Seta. ? Fifth century.*

Among the extensive ruins of the Hauran very few traces of baptisteries have been found. The most important is that

[1] Conder, C. R., and Kitchener, *Survey of Western Palestine*, Memoirs, 1883, vol. iii, p. 321.

[2] *Ib.*, p. 368.

of Deir Seta. It is a hexagonal building, some way from the church, with a sort of portico adjoining. The sides are 15 feet in length, so the diameter is some 30 feet. The central basin is described as not visible because covered by the ruins of the roof, but it is marked in the plan as hexagonal, with six pillars that once supported a ciborium. If the plan is correct the basin must have been some 8 to 10 feet across[1].

Another at Moudjeleia is given on pl. lxiii, but no measurements are given.

There is one also at Qal'at Sim'an, the church built soon after the death of Simeon of the pillar, who died 460. It is an octagonal building, but nothing is said of the shape or size of the font[2].

> In the 'Acta Maris Apostoli' is the following account of the origin of a baptistery in Mesopotamia or Persia. The saint has converted the king after casting out seventy-two devils from his son, which fly out of his mouth in the form of strange beasts, 'regem vero et civitatem baptizavit in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti. Fornacem autem regii palatii foderunt usque ad aquas, et aedificavit beatus Mar Mares ecclesiam. Et super aquam fornacis quam in puteum converterant aedificavit baptisterium, et puteus usque in hodiernum diem iuxta testimonium nonnullorum baptisterium est; et signa magna efficiuntur ab aquis illis.'
>
> The Acts are ascribed to the fifth or sixth century, but may possibly be of the fourth, as there is no reference to Nestorianism in them[3].

The churches of Asia Minor and Byzantium were closely connected with that of Syria, and the fonts seem to have been of the same shape as those which represent the earlier traditions of Palestine.

Ex. 70. *Aladschadagh. Sixth century.*

A baptistery near Myra in Lycia is described as built in the form of a Greek cross with a breadth of 4·5 metres

[1] De Vogüé, *Syrie Centrale*, pl. cxvii.

[2] *Ib.*, pl. cxxxix–cli.

[3] *Analecta Bollandiana*, 1885, iv, 79 and Introd., p. 45.

between the pillars at the angles. The square basin (Taufbrunnen) still stands in the centre, and is ·82 metres high and ·86 broad. The building is of the same age as the neighbouring church, which is of the 'usual early Christian basilica form' with a fore-court, and capitals 'resembling those of S. Vitale at Ravenna.' We may therefore place it in the sixth century[1].

Ex. 71. *Gül Bagtische. Seventh century.*

The ruins of a baptistery have been recently discovered at Gül-Bagtische, two hours west of Vurla (Clazomenae). It stood with its chambers for the preparation of the catechumens on the north side of the church. The font was square and constructed of white marble slabs, and seems to have stood under a canopy. Three steps (two as given in the plan) led down to it. The channels to fill and empty the basin are still visible. The font itself is about 1½ metres across, the central slab being about 1 metre square. The depth is not stated, but judging from the steps it must be rather less than 1 metre. The building is attributed to the seventh century.

> Erhalten sind von dem Taufort die Fundamente der Umfassungsmauern, im Innern vier starke aufgemauerte Eckpfeiler, aus gut gearbeiteten Quadern, und im Centrum das mit drei Stufen versehene Taufbassin in weissem Marmor ausgeführt. Die Marmorplatten waren mit Gips verkettet. Dass der Wasserzufluss hier auch ein künstlicher war, beweisen die Wasserrohre, die das eine oben an der SW. Ecke des Bassins im Boden, das andre in der westlichen Umfassungsmauer noch aufrecht, in situ, stehen. Unten im Bassin selbst, an der Nordwand, führte eine Thonrohrleitung das Wasser ab[2].

Ex. 72. *S. Sophia, Constantinople. Fifth century.*

A circular building at the NE. angle of S. Sophia at Constantinople is supposed to be the baptistery of the pre-

[1] Petersen, E., and von Luschan, F., *Reisen in Lykien*, Wien, 1889, vol. ii, pp. 38 ff.

[2] *Byzantinische Zeitschrift*, Oct. 1901, p. 568.

Justinian church, and to have escaped the fire that destroyed the old building in 532. It is 45 feet in diameter, but no traces of a font are described.

In the Imperial Museum at Constantinople, however, is a large marble font of oval quatrefoil shape, which was formerly in the precincts of the Mosque Zeinab Sultana, to the west of S. Sophia (Fig. 56). It is 8 ft. 2½ in. long, 6 ft. 1½ in.

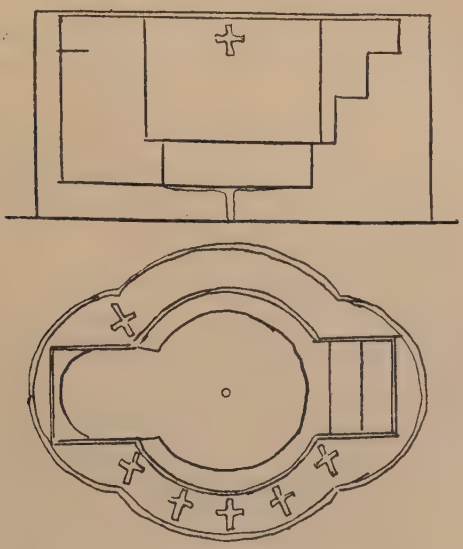

Fig. 56.

wide, and 4 ft. 6 in. deep. At one end it can be entered by a descent of two steps[1].

In the illustration the section gives three steps, while the plan has the usual two. Another smaller one is mentioned as existing in the precincts of the Mosque Kotza Mustapha Pasha (p. 81).

A small octagonal building described by Blouet (*Exploration scientifique de la Morée*, 1831) appears from the engraving (pl. 3) to be merely a fountain.

[1] Lethaby and Swainson, *The Church of Sancta Sophia*, London, 1894, pp. 19, 81, 183.

Ex. 73. *Salona. Before* 641.

A plan and description of the group of buildings that formed the baptistery of the cathedral of Salona, near Spalato in Dalmatia, was published in 1850 by Dr. Fr. Carrara (*De' Scavi di Salona nel* 1848, Vienna), but no description of the font itself was given beyond stating that it was of marble and mosaic. The plan, which is reproduced in Garrucci, tav. 278, and has been frequently reproduced in books of Christian archaeology, is misleading, and represents it as T-shaped.

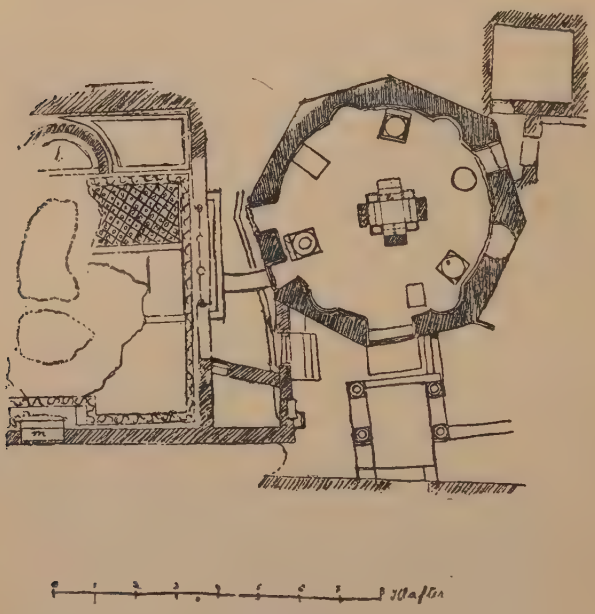

Fig. 57.

A more accurate plan is given by Fr. Lanza in his work *Monumenti Salonitani inediti*, Vienna, 1856, tav. ii. fig. 2. He describes the font as square, and entered on three sides by a descent of two steps (Fig. 57). On the third side there seems to have been a desk for the bishop, and at the four corners were red marble pillars which must have served to support a canopy.

Since that time unfortunately the font has suffered further damage, as for some years there was no curator of the ruins. The steps have disappeared as well as the remains of the bishop's desk. The hole by which the basin was emptied can still be seen and is shown in the illustration (Fig. 58), but the leaden pipe mentioned by Lanza has gone.

In its present condition the font is 1 metre wide by ·80 m. deep, but originally it could not have been more than ·70–·80 m. square, and could only hold one person with difficulty. A description of the recent excavations of the adjoining

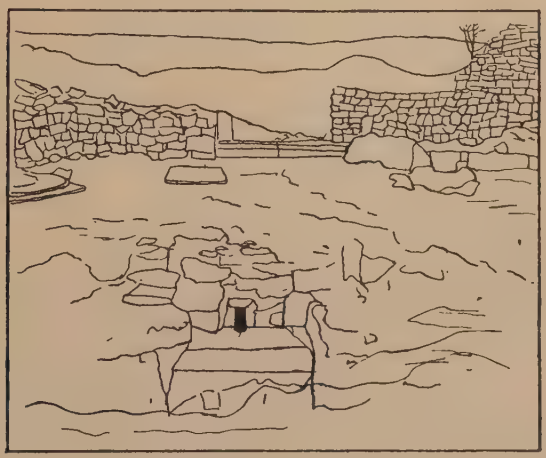

Fig. 58 (from a photograph).

basilica, in the course of which the canal for conveying the water to the baptistery was discovered, will appear in the *Bullettino d' Archeologia e Storia Dalmata* for 1902.

I am indebted for the above information to the kindness of Prof. Fr. Bulić, Director of the Museum at Spalato, who considers that the font could not have been used for submersion (Untertauchung), and that the rite must have been administered by affusion (Aufgiessen).

Salona was taken by the Avars in 641, and the inhabitants fled to Spalato and took refuge in the ruins of the palace of

Diocletian. The baptistery must therefore be at least as old as the sixth century.

Guida di Spalato e Salona. Zara, 1894, p. 233. Nel centro dell' edifizio, lastricata tutto a mosaico di pasta di vetro dorato, stava una vasca rettangolare di marmo a cui da due lati salivasi mediante due gradini anch' essi di marmo, mentre al lato volto a borea faceva capo il tubo conduttore dell' acqua. Ai quattri angoli della vasca si rinvennero gli avanzi di sottili colonne di marmo rosso, che probabilmente avranno servito a sostegno di un ciborio a foggia di baldacchino posto sopra la vasca battesimale.

CHAPTER VI

THE FONT IN THE WEST

Fonts in the Catacombs.

Boldetti, in his description of the Roman catacombs published in 1720, declares that several baptisteries were discovered there. Only three, however, are known to exist.

Ex. 74. *Cemeterium Ostrianum. ? Third century.*

The first is in the *Cemeterium Ostrianum* on the Via Nomentana, a few hundred yards beyond the church of S. Agnese, and was discovered in 1876. No description of the font is given in the account of the discovery in the *Bullettino* for 1876, or in Professor Marucchi's chapter on the catacomb in his *Éléments d'archéologie chrétienne*, vol. ii; but I am told by the author of the latter work that it is formed by hollowing out the rock to receive a natural spring, and that it is small and not deep. The basin seems to be in a part that was excavated in the third century.

In the Acts of Papias and Maurus we read that the saints suffered death in the Diocletian persecution, and were buried near the Via Nomentana, 'ad nymphas ubi Petrus baptizabat.'

The document dates from the fifth century, but other discoveries have identified the cemetery beyond doubt and proved its connexion with very early traditions of the Apostle.

Ex. 75. *Cemetery of Priscilla. Fourth century.*

In 1901 the discovery of a baptistery was made in the cemetery of Priscilla on the Via Salaria Nova, by Professor Marucchi and the Commission of Sacred Archaeology. At the bottom of the staircase of S. Silvester, near the chapel of the Acilii Glabriones, is a small apse with a niche at its further end

leading to a large tank at a slightly lower level (Fig. 59). A *graffito* on the arch above, 'qui sitit veniat ad me et bibat,' frequently found in baptisteries, proves that this chamber was used for the administration of the sacrament. The basin is about 3½ metres wide, 9 metres long, and 1·40 deep.

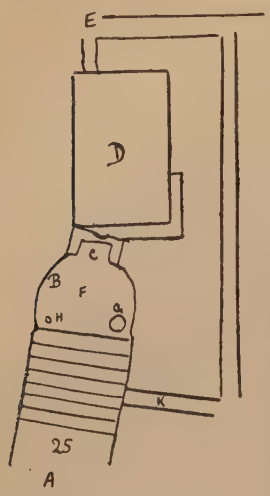

Fig. 59. A. Entrance by staircase of 25 steps. B. Apse. C. Niche at the end of the apse. D. Basin full of water. E. Channel of water. F. Travertine pavement. G. Depression hollowed out in the pavement. H. Drain to carry off the water. K. Modern passage.

Professor Marucchi considers that it may have been used for baptism by 'immersion,' the candidate using a wooden ladder or perhaps a single stone; but such a proceeding would have been very awkward, and the presence of a hollow in the travertine floor of the apse above, and a hole to carry off the water, makes it quite unnecessary to suggest it even as an alternative method[1]. Crostarosa, in the Report of the Commission, holds that the water was drawn from the tank and poured over the head of the catechumen, pointing out that the niches in the wall (for lamps) are round the apse and leave the 'font' in darkness.

In questa piscina poteva discendersi servendosi di pochi gradini in legno o di una semplice pietra, essendo profunda soltanto 1 m. 40. Onde il battesimo vi si poteva conferire per immersione, essendo accessibile la piscina, o anche per infusione vedendosi innanzi all' abside l'incavo per assicurare la pelvis (G) e il foro per lo scolo dell' acqua.

p. 164. In fondo allo scalone è il posto per il battesimo coperto di un' apside, in questa fu praticata un' apertura per attingere acqua dalla piscina e versarla sulla testa del catechumeno.

[1] *Bull.*, 1901, p. 71 (plan and photographs, tavv. 2, 2 a, and 3).

When Liberius (352–356) was forbidden by Constantius to come within the walls of the city, he lived, we read, as an exile in the cemetery of Novella on the Via Salaria. This cemetery was an addition to that of Priscilla made by Marcellus some fifty years before (Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.*, ch. xxxi, p. 164).

When Easter approached he was advised by Damasus to baptize there, as S. Peter was said to have done in the neighbouring *Cemeterium Ostrianum* on the Via Nomentana, and 4,000 persons are said to have received the rite there. Marucchi believes that the recently discovered baptistery was made on this occasion, and a *graffito* discovered on its walls giving the consular date 375 makes it probable that the Acts of Liberius, which are not later than the sixth century (Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.*, vol. i, p. cxxii), contain a genuine tradition explaining the origin of this fourth-century structure.

> Constantius iussit eum extra civitatem habitare: habitabat autem ab urbe Roma millario tertio quasi exul in cymiterio Novellae via Salaria. Veniens autem dies Paschae vocavit universos presbyteros cives romanos et diaconos et sedit in cymiterio. Damasus dixit 'Baptiza in pelve ubi magister. Pelvis illa non lignum, sed totus mundus est.'
>
> Erat enim non longe a cymeterio Novellae cymeterius Ostrianus [sic] ubi Petrus apostolus baptizabat. Eodem tempore Paschae baptizavit promiscui sexus numero quatuor millia duodecim. *Acta Liberii et Damasi*, ed. Constant., *Epist. Pont.*, p. 9; Migne, *Patrol. Lat.*, t. viii, pp. 1388–93.

Ex. 76. *Cemetery of Pontianus. Sixth century.*

The baptistery in the cemetery of Pontianus on the Via Portuensis dates from the sixth century. It is formed by allowing a natural spring to collect in an oblong trench excavated in the rock. It is 2 metres wide and one deep, but is seldom full. A flight of steps leads down to it, and there is a small level space of about 4 feet across for the officiating bishop to stand on. The fresco above, which leaves no doubt as to the purpose of the excavation, has already been described[1].

[1] Marucchi, O., *Éléments d'archéologie chrétienne*, vol. ii, p. 63.

A font in the catacomb of S. Gennaro at Naples is considered below.

Ex. 77. Alexandria.

In the description of the catacomb of Alexandria given in the *Bullettino* for 1865, p. 60, we read of a large basin excavated in the floor, which seems once to have been crossed by a channel in which water flowed. No measurements are given, but from the plan it seems to have been circular, and a little wider than the loculi cut to receive the bodies, and therefore presumably about 1 to 1½ metres across. The catacomb dates from the third century, and De Rossi holds that 'such a structure for holding water has the appearance of a font rather than a well' (p. 62).

Fonts in baptisteries.

Marcellus I (308–310) is said in the *Liber Pontificalis* to have restored or established twenty-five churches for baptism in Rome. No traces of such churches have survived, and it is more probable that the author refers to parish churches where preparation for baptism was carried on, as the administration of the rite required the presence of a bishop.

> Duchesne, *Origines du Culte chrétien*, p. 164. Églises paroissiales où avaient lieu les instructions préparatoires au baptême... Je dis les exercices préparatoires, car la célébration du baptême . . . requérant la présence de l'évêque, ces cérémonies s'accomplissaient dans une réunion générale et non par circonscription de paroisse.

Ex. 78. The Lateran baptistery.

The most important baptistery of the fourth century in the West was that erected by Constantine at the Lateran, which we have partially described above. The whole was restored by Xystus III (432–440) and the upper pillars are modern, but it is generally considered that the shape has not been altered. The basin is octagonal and the depth about

3 feet. It is 62 feet in diameter in a building of 90 feet diameter, and is therefore unusually large in proportion to the baptistery. It has a desk for the bishop on the north side, and is entered on the south by two steps.

This is quite the largest that exists, and from the descriptions was evidently considered something exceptional. It seems to have been for the West what the church at Tyre was for the East, and to have inaugurated a new type, but whether as an amplification of a form already traditional, or as a change from one almost identical with a private bath to a building modelled on the pattern of the public thermae, it is difficult to say.

Ex. 79. *S. Stefano on the Via Latina.* *c.* 450.

That the latter was the case is suggested by the remains of a baptistery in the ruins of the church of S. Stefano on the Via Latina, which dates from the middle of the fifth century. It was built on the site of an old Roman villa and the baptistery lay on the north-west, to the right of the altar, in which direction are to be seen extensive remains of baths. The font is circular, about 6 feet in diameter, and the parapet has been broken away, but the hole for draining the water away still remains as well as that by which it was filled, showing that the present depth of about 3 feet is original. Two semicircular masses of masonry fill up nearly half the space, and were possibly the substructures of the pulpits in which the bishop and his assistants stood [1].

This font suggested the plan on which an interesting modern font has been constructed in the parish church of Lambeth for the purpose of administering baptism by submersion, but it has been found necessary nearly to double the diameter and the depth, and to introduce seven steps by which the candidate descends to the bottom. In the font at S. Stefano it was found on experiment to be nearly impossible to crouch down

[1] Marucchi, O., *Éléments d'archéologie chrétienne*, vol. ü, ch. 6, p. 200.

so as to bring the whole body below what would have been the surface level of the water.

Exx. 80, 81. *Naples. Fourth century.*

Two fonts of similar shape and size remain in Naples. One is in a building to the right of the apse of the basilica of S. Restituta, the roof of which contains mosaics of the fourth century; the hole for emptying the basin is still visible. The other is in the court in front of the galleries of the catacomb of S. Gennaro. Here the parapet of the font is broken away, but the base of the bishop's desk remains, and opposite it on the east side the rim is broken for the descent into the water. The hole for draining is still visible at a depth of 3 to 4 feet. In the adjoining chamber are the remains of a raised platform on which an altar once stood, and of the seats in the apse on either side of the bishop's throne. They probably date from the fourth century, though the roof has considerable remains of frescoes of the first or early second century. The font is therefore probably also of the fourth, though one is tempted to regard it as dating from before the peace of the Church, and as abandoned when another, copied from it, was erected in the basilica in the city.

There is also a niche in the rock pointed out as the new baptistery just under the fresco described above (p. 298). No trace of the basin is left, but it must have been quite small, no bigger than a modern font.

We read in the *Gesta Episcoporum Neapolitanorum*, written by John the Deacon of S. Januarius of Naples, that S. Restituta was built by Zosimus, apparently at the instigation of Sylvester of Rome. Severus, who succeeded him, built four basilicas, including that of S. Fortunatus, which he ornamented with mosaic. Soter (465) built the church of the Apostles and either a parish church or a baptistery (plevem post Sanctum Severum secundus instituit; according to Muratori plebe=ecclesiae baptismales sive parochiales). Victor, a contemporary of Pope Gelasius (492), built two basilicas outside

the walls, one dedicated in the name of S. Stephen about a mile out before the chapel of S. Januarius, and another, S. Euphemia, just outside the gate. Stephanus (496) built the church *ad nomen Salvatoris*, which was generally known as the Stephania. The apse of this church was destroyed by fire, and was restored and decorated with a mosaic representing the Transfiguration by John (532), but the church was again destroyed by fire and rebuilt by Stephen (766).

Vincent (550–560) built the greater baptistery (baptisterium fontis maioris) in or near the archbishop's palace, and John in the time of Pope Deusdedit (? Deodatus 615) built an additional room for the administration of the unction that followed after baptism (consignatorium alvatorum [ablutorum, Mur.] inter fontes maiores a domino Sotero episcopo digestae et ecclesiam Stephaniam per quorum baptizati ingredientes ianuas a parte leva ibidem in medio residenti offeruntur episcopo et benedictione accepta per ordinem egrediuntur parti sinistrae. Id ipsud et in parietibus super columnas depingere iussit).

Athanasius (847) carried out a great deal of ornamenting of various churches at S. Januarius and elsewhere[1].

The existing baptistery in S. Restituta is usually identified either with that built by Soter or with that constructed by Vincent, but it is difficult to believe that the first basilica of S. Restituta was without the font which formed so important a feature of the churches at Tyre and Rome. More light will no doubt be thrown on the subject by the new discoveries and investigations of Mgr. G. A. Galante referred to on pp. 219 and 221 of the *Römische Quartalschrift* for 1900, and in the *Bullettino* for 1900, p. 99.

Ex. 82. *Nocera dei Pagani, near Naples. Fifth century.*

The baptistery of S. Maria Maggiore at Nocera dei Pagani was a circular building, erected in the fifth century, 80 feet in diameter and with an apse. The piscina is circular, with a diameter of 18 feet and an octagonal rim. It was surrounded

[1] Johannes Diaconus Ecclesiae S. Januarii Neapoli, *Gesta Episcoporum Neapolitanorum* (Muratori, *Rerum Italicarum Scriptores*, 1723).—Also in *Monumenta Germaniae historica, Scriptorum rerum Langobardicarum et Italicarum Saec.* vi–ix, 1877.

originally by eight pillars, of which three remain. Two steps run round the inside of the basin, which is therefore not more than 2 to 3 feet deep[1].

The *Dict. of Christ. Antiquities* gives the depth as 5 feet. Its authority appears to be Fergusson, whose elevation however gives a depth of about 3 feet. The plan and section in Dehio and Von Bezold are from Isabelle, who gives the diameter from pillar to pillar as 6·150 metres, that of the floor of the basin 4 metres, and the depth, judging from the plan, as about 1¼ metre.

Baptistery of S. Peter's.

The baptistery of S. Peter's was destroyed in the rebuilding of the cathedral in the sixteenth century. It lay to the right of the sanctuary, probably at the end of the north transept. A small font seems to have been constructed when the church was built, which proved insufficient. In the time of the Emperor Constantius the Catholic Christians were forbidden to use the Lateran baptistery, and were compelled to go outside the walls of the city for the administration of the sacrament. We have seen above how Liberius at this time (probably) had the font constructed in the cemetery of S. Priscilla (p. 335), and the Acts of Liberius relate how Damasus got permission to build a larger font at S. Peter's with a more ample supply of water, and how he helped with his own hands in its construction. The building was ornamented with mosaics by Longinus, prefect of Rome in 403.

The Acts date from the sixth century, but a contemporary inscription in the crypt of S. Peter's relates how Damasus first made the cistern in the hill above, from which the water was drawn.

> Damasus dixit . . . date mihi opera ministerii ut haec aqua mundetur desuper cadavera hominum. Fecit autem cuniculos

[1] *Dict. Christian Antiquities*, art. 'Baptistery.'—Fergusson, *Architecture*, vol. i, p. 385.—Dehio and Bezold, *Die kirchliche Baukunst des Abendlandes*, Stuttgart, 1892.—Isabelle, *Les Édifices circulaires*, Paris, 1855.

duos et exinanivit locum illum qui est a dextera introeuntibus in basilicam beati Petri apostoli. Habebat enim ibidem fontem qui (*sic*) non sufficiebat. Et caecidit montem Damasus manu sua. Et introivit plus quam consuetum est. Et construxit fontem[1].

The baptistery is thus described by Prudentius (*Peristeph.* xii. 31–41).

Dextra Petrum regio tectis tenet aureis receptum
Canens oliva murmurans fluento.
Namque supercilio saxi liquor ortus excitavit
Fontem perennem chrismatis feracem.
Nunc pretiosa ruit per marmora lubricatque clivum,
Donec virenti fluctuet colymbo.
Interior tumuli pars est, ubi lapsibus sonoris
Stagnum nivali volvitur profundo.
Omnicolor vitreas pictura superne tingit undas,
Musci relucent et virescit aurum
Cyaneusque latex umbram trahit imminentis ostri,
Credas moveri fluctibus lacunar.
Pastor oves alit ipse illic gelidi rigore fontis
Videt sitire quas fluenta Christi.

African Fonts.

As early as the second century there was a flourishing Christian Church in Africa. Chapels were erected at the place where Cyprian was martyred and over the spot where his body was buried, and probably many churches were built in the long peace between the persecutions of Decius and Diocletian, but no example is known to survive which dates from before the conversion of Constantine. The fourth and fifth centuries, however, were great ages of church building, as the numerous consecration sermons of Augustine testify.

After the fall of Carthage, in 439, the Catholic Christians were persecuted by the Arian Vandals, who preferred confiscating the older churches to building new ones for them-

[1] Migne, *Patr. Lat.*, viii, p. 1392.—Duchesne, *Lib. Pont.*, Introd. cxxii.—Kirsch, J. P., 'Zur Geschichte der alten Petruskirche,' *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1890, p. 118.

selves; and the overthrow of their dominion by Belisarius in 534 found the country too wasted to do more, as a rule, than keep the older basilicas in repair. When the country was again conquered by the Arabs at the end of the seventh century, the churches, already in many cases only used in half their area, gradually fell into complete ruin.

Ex. 83. *Carthage. ? Fourth or fifth century.*

A baptistery was discovered at Carthage by Sgr. Cesana in 1880. The font is described as octagonal, with two steps going down into it. Among the ruins were found fragments of plaster that had fallen from the dome over the basin, the diameter of which measured 2·83 metres ('frammenti d'intonaco dipinto caduti dalla cupola dell' ottagono, il cui diametro maggiore è di metri 2·83').

A mosaic of four fish was also found, and near it some lamps and an earthenware vessel (orciuolo fittile) of rough make and ornamented with fishes, which De Rossi ascribes to the fifth century, and suggests that it was used for baptism by affusion[1].

Ex. 84. *Damous el Karita. Fourth century.*

The basilica of Damous el Karita had a large hexagonal fountain in the atrium, which lay to the north side of the church, while in the baptistery on the south side the font is still to be seen. It is circular below and hexagonal above. It has a diameter of 3 metres and is entered by four steps. The depth is estimated at ·80–·90 m. The hole for emptying the basin is still to be seen[2].

De Rossi suggests that this was the church referred to in a sermon '*De passione SS. Donati et Advocati*,' printed after

[1] *Bull.*, 1881, p. 125.

[2] *Bull.*, 1898, p. 219.—Wieland, Dr. Fr., *Ein Ausflug ins altchristliche Africa*, Stuttgart, 1890, pp. 25 and 31.—Gsell, S., *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, Rome, 1894, p. 25. Several more baptisteries are mentioned in *Les monuments antiques de l'Algérie*, Paris, 1901, by the same author. Cf. also *R. Q. S.*, 1902, p. 81.

the works of Optatus. Dr. Wieland thinks it may have been erected on the spot where S. Perpetua suffered.

Ex. 85. *Hammam el Lif. Fourth or fifth century.*

A baptistery recently discovered at Hammam el Lif, opposite Carthage, has a cylindrical font ·65 m. high on the outside, and with a diameter of 1·24 m. (Fig. 60). The centre of the basin has a further depth of ·60 m. with

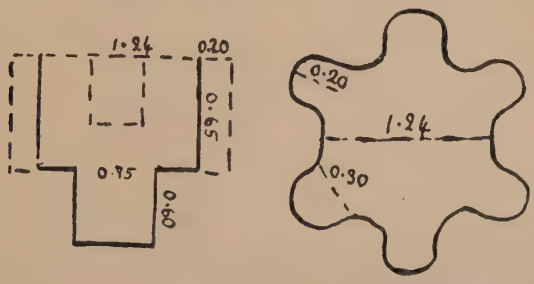

Fig. 60.

a diameter of ·75 m., making a total depth of 1·25 m. There are six little recesses round the upper rim, but one of these does not reach to the top as the side is broken by a step. It was therefore impossible to fill the font to the brim, and the water could never have been more than one metre deep.

Ex. 86. *Tebessa. Before* 439.

A monastic church at Tebessa (Theveste) near Carthage is remarkable for its similarity in measurement to Solomon's temple at Jerusalem. Dated inscriptions show that it was built before 439.

The baptistery stands to the right of the atrium, and is described as a narrow oblong room (ein länglicher winkeliger Raum), containing a circular font of 2 m. diameter and formed by three concentric stone rings. The outer ring is partly original, but has been restored in later times from material taken from a building of the classic period. A deep

groove runs round the edge and served as a channel to convey the water from some spring [1].

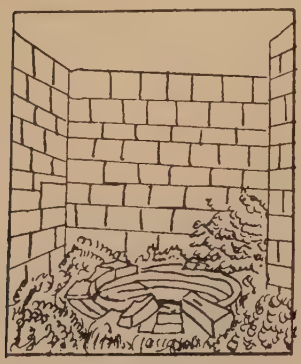

Fig. 61.

Dr. Wieland informs me that the basin was at most ·80 m. deep. There seems from the illustration in his book (Fig. 61) to have been a canopy over the font supported on pillars, the bases of which remain.

Ex. 87. *Tigzirt.* *Sixth century.*

At Tigzirt near Algiers is a font which is described as circular and formed out of three concentric stone rings. It stands in a baptistery of cruciform shape with rounded ends. The basin is ·45 m. high on the outside and measures 1·80 in diameter, and is therefore probably about ·80 m. deep. The drain for carrying away the water is still visible, but there is no trace of any channel by which the font was filled. Two large vessels were found near, which may have served to bring the water, or it may have fallen from a fountain-head above as in the Lateran baptistery and in that of Eustorgius at Milan. The remains of a platform can be seen on the east side, which may have served to facilitate the entrance into the water but was more probably the base of the bishop's desk. The bases of two of the columns which supported the ciborium are still in their place. The building would seem to be of the sixth century, as it lies between the old Roman wall and the outer Byzantine fortification, though it has been ascribed to the early fifth century [2].

[1] *Bull.*, 1899, p. 51.—Wieland, pp. 97, 98.—Ballu, A., *Monuments antiques de l'Algérie: Tebessa, Lambèse, Timgad*, Paris, 1894.

[2] Wieland, pp. 172-3.—Gavault, P., *Études sur les Ruines romaines de Tigzirt, Bibliothèque d'Archéologie Africaine*, Fasc. 2, Paris, 1897, p. 88.

Ex. 88. *Tipasa. Fourth century.*

At Tipasa, to the west of Algiers, there is another font of almost identical form. It stands in a square baptistery between the basilica and the sea. It is formed of three concentric rings and measures 3·40 m. in diameter, narrowing down to 1·30 in the centre, and is not more than 1 m. deep. The church is thought to date from the fourth century [1].

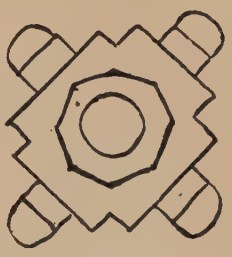

Fig. 62.

Ex. 89. *El Kantara.*

The font from the church of El Kantara on the island of Djerba has been transported to Tunis. It is made of white marble and is of cruciform shape externally and octagonal within. Its depth is only ·60 m. (Fig. 62).

I am indebted to M. Père Delattre, Supérieur des Pères Blancs, S. Louis de Carthage, for this information as well as for the details of the font at Hammam el Lif.

There is also a baptistery at Castiglione, near Algiers, which lies under the apse of the baptistery (cf. the font at Amwas) [2], and another, dating from the fourth or fifth century, is mentioned as existing at Busguniae on Cape Matifon, near Algiers, in the *Römische Quartalschrift*, 1901, p. 91.

I am indebted to the kindness of Dr. Wieland for many details in the above section.

Ex. 90. *Ravenna.* 449–452.

The font in the Orthodox Baptistery at Ravenna is octagonal, with a diameter of about 3·40 m. and a depth of about 1½ m. The entrance is opposite to the bishop's desk which is raised by two steps, so that the head of a man standing in the

[1] Wieland, p. 183.—Gsell, S., *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire*, xiv, Rome, 1894, p. 358.

[2] *Bulletin archéologique du Comité des Travaux historiques*, 1896, pts. 1 & 2.

water would be well below the reach of his hands (Figs. 63, 64). A porphyry sarcophagus, raised up to the level of the desk, is now used for a font, but originally the rite could only be administered by pouring water on the catechumen's head, the water in the basin being quite out of reach. The building is supposed to have been a chamber of the public baths before it was converted to its present use by Neon (449–452)[1].

Fig. 63.

The basin has disappeared from the Arian baptistery, but its site is marked by a round slab of porphyry of about 3 m. in diameter, which was possibly its floor.

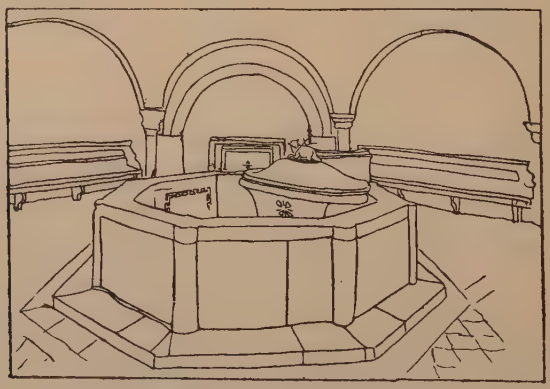

Fig. 64 (from a photograph).

Ex. 91. *Parenzo. Sixth century.*

The baptistery of the cathedral at Parenzo is at the west end of the building, and received its present form from Eufrasius in the first part of the sixth century; but this building was erected on earlier foundations of a structure raised

[1] Isabelle, *Les Édifices circulaires et les Dômes*, Paris, 1855.—Ricci, C., *Guida di Ravenna*, Bologna, 1900, p. 32.

in 313, and this again on another of the second century. A mosaic of the third century, with a pattern of fishes, has been found on this lowest level, but it lies in a different part of the church and is probably of secular origin. The baptistery is 8 metres across; the hexagonal font appears to be about 3 m. in diameter[1].

Ex. 92. *Cividale.* 716–762.

The town of Cividale in Friuli (Forum Iulii) near Aquileia was for a long time in possession of the Lombards, and the baptistery erected by the patriarch Calixtus (716–762) is perhaps the earliest example of distinctively Lombard art. It was restored by Sigwald in 774, and the font was brought into the cathedral in the seventeenth century. It is octagonal and surmounted by a ciborium. The height of the structure is 3·8 metres and its diameter 3 m. There are three steps (but always pictured as two) leading up to the rim of the basin and two to go down into it. In the section in Garrucci[2] the steps are represented as steeper than usual. If the drawing is correct, this would seem to be a sign of the beginning of the attempt to introduce the practice of baptism by submersion.

> Es ist achteckig und hat eine Höhe von 3·8 Meter und einen Durchmesser von 3 Meter. Zu demselben führen gegenwärtig drei Stufen und zwei zum Hinabsteigen in die piscina concha fontium. Ob ursprünglich statt der fünf Stufen sieben vorhanden gewesen, ist zwar wahrscheinlich, lässt sich aber nicht mehr sicher stellen. Die oberste Stufe, auf der jene standen, die bei dem Taufacte beschäftigt waren, wurde 'fundamentum aquae et stabilimentum pedum' genannt. Den ganzen inneren Raum nimmt die Piscina ein. Sie war, wie der Massstab zeigt, hinlänglich geräumig zum Taufacte durch Immersion.

See, however, p. 351 below.

[1] *Bull.*, 1896, p. 14, and plan.

[2] Garr., vol. 6, tav. 425.—R. von Eitelberger von Edelberg, *Gesammelte kunsthistorische Schriften*, III, Wien, 1884, p. 329.

Ex. 93. *Poitiers. Fourth century.*

A Merovingian baptistery dating from the sixth or seventh century still exists at Poitiers. It seems, however, to stand on the site of an older building, the font of which was excavated in 1890 by M. P. C. de la Croix, Directeur des Musées de la Société des Antiquaires de l'Ouest, &c. He informed me that it was damaged by the building having been used as a bell-foundry in 1827, but could be easily restored. It was about 1 m. deep, octagonal, and was entered by three steps. The water, however, which came from a third-century aqueduct, entered on a level with the bottom of the basin and could never have been more than ·21 m. deep. He considers that the font dates from the fourth century.

Ex. 94. *Aquileia. Eighth century.*

An engraving of an eighth-century font at Aquileia is given in Smith's *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, where it appears as an irregular hexagon with broken pillars at the corners standing on a low parapet rim, and a step running round inside. The plans, however, represent it as octagonal. It seems to be of the usual size, and to have the usual two steps running round the inside. It may therefore be 1 metre deep[1].

Ex. 95. *Schacheneck in Lothringen. Ninth or tenth century.*

At Schacheneck in Lothringen is a baptistery with a font dating from Carolingian times (ninth or tenth century). It is ·80 m. deep, the inside diameter ·92 m., the outside breadth 1·30 m., and the thickness of the rim ·20 m.; there is a small circular opening at the bottom showing that the present depth is original[2].

[1] Holzinger, Dr. H., *Die altchristliche Architectur*, Stuttgart, 1889, pp. 219 & 220, where the same two incompatible illustrations appear.

[2] Kraus, F. X., *Kunst und Alterthum in Elsass-Lothringen*, vol. iii, p. 915, with a picture. Prof. Kraus adds: 'Die Taufe geschah in diesen grossen Kufen (about 2½ feet deep) noch durch Untertauchen'!

SYNOPTIC TABLE OF FONTS.

Place.	Date.	Shape.	Diameter.	Depth.
Fountain-heads in Palestine .	. . . .	. . . . .	3–20 ft. . . .	1–3 ft.
Fonts in Cemeteries.				
75. Cemetery of Priscilla . .	325–366	? { oblong . . / circular . .	$3\frac{1}{2}$ × 9 m. .	? { 1·40 m. [floor. / hollow in
74. Ostrian Cemetery . . .	3rd cent.	?	small . . .	not deep.
76. Cemetery of Pontianus .	6th cent.	oblong	2 × 1 m. . .	1 m.
81. Catacomb at Naples . .	4th cent.	circular . . .	6 ft.	3 ft.
77. Catacomb of Alexandria .	3rd cent.	circular . . .	1–1$\frac{1}{2}$ m. . .	?
Egypt.				
61. Dair Mâri Mîna . . .	4th cent.	circular . . .	small . . .	?
62. Dair Abu' 's Sifain . .	10th cent.	circular . . .	3 ft.	4 ft.
62 a. ,, ,, . . .	10th cent.	circular . . .	3 ft.	3 ft.
63. Abu Sargah	6th cent.	circular . . .	2 ft.	?
,, ,, ...	2nd or 3rd c.	circular . . .	30 in. . . .	?
64. Dair al Abiad	3rd or 4th c.	circular . . .	4 ft.	?
65. Al' Adra	very old	circular . . .	under 3 ft. . .	?
Syria and the East.				
66. Tyre	314	oblong	6 ft.	2$\frac{1}{2}$ ft.
67. Amwas	4th cent.	cruciform with rounded ends	3·5 m. . . .	1·35 m. (water ·70 m.)
68. Beit 'Aûwa	? 4th c.	square . . .	2 ft. 3 in. . .	20 in. (28 in. outside).
68 a. Khŭrbet Tekûa . . .	? 4th c.	octagonal . . .	4 ft.	4 ft. (outside).
69. Deir Seta	5–6th c.	hexagonal with ciborium	8–10 ft. . . .	?
70. Aladschadagh	6th cent.	square	·86 m. . . .	·82 m.
71. Gül Bagtische	7th cent.	square	1$\frac{1}{2}$ m. . . .	1 m.
72. S. Sophia	?	oval quatrefoil	3 ft. 2$\frac{1}{2}$ in. × 6 ft. 1$\frac{1}{2}$ in.	4 ft. 6 in.
73. Salona	4–6th c.	square with ciborium	1 m.	·80 m.
Rome and early Italian.				
78. Lateran baptistery . . .	324–337	octagonal . . .	62 ft. . . .	3 ft.
79. S. Stefano on the Via Latina	5th cent.	circular . . .	6 ft.	3 ft.
80. S. Restituta, Naples . .	4th cent.	circular . . .	6 ft.	3 ft.
82. Nocera dei Pagani . . .	5th cent.	circular . . .	18 ft. . . .	2–3 ft.
Africa.				
83. Carthage	4–5th c.	octagonal . . .	2·83 m. . . .	1·15–95 m.
84. Damous el Karita . . .	4–5th c.	hexagonal . .	3 m.	·80–·90 m.
85. Hammam el Lif . . .	?	circular . . .	1·25 m. . . .	1·25 m.
86. Tebessa	before 439	circ. with ciborium	2 m.	·80 m.
87. Tigzirt	6th cent.	circular . . .	1·80 m. . . .	·80 m.
88. Tipasa	4th cent.	circular . . .	3·40 m. . . .	1 m.
89. El Kantara	?	cruciform . . .	?	·60.
Late Italian and other fonts.				
90. Ravenna	449–452	octagonal . . .	3·40 m. . . .	1·25 m.
91. Parenzo	6th cent.	hexagonal . .	3 m.	?
92. Cividale	716–762	octagonal with ciborium	3 m.	?
93. Poitiers	4th cent.	octagonal . . .	?	·21 m.
94. Aquileia	8th cent.	hexagonal with ciborium	. . . . .	1 m.
95. Schacheneck	9–10th c.	circular . . .	·92 m. . . .	·80 m.

Two types of Fonts.

It will be noticed that these fonts may be divided into two types. In the East they are generally small square or circular basins (Exx. 61–65, 68 a, 70), while sometimes they are elongated on four sides and so made the shape of a Greek cross (Exx. 66–68, 71, 73). In the West they are usually octagonal or circular, greater in diameter but not deeper, while the two steps generally run round the whole circumference, the whole forming a wide shallow basin (Exx. 78, 86, 91, &c. &c.).

There is often a parapet as well and a pulpit for the bishop (Exx. 78–81, 90, &c.), while frequently we find pillars to support a ciborium over the basin (Exx. 69, 78, 82, 86, 92, 94).

Both types seem to have developed from the small baths in domestic use in which baptism was administered in pre-Constantinian times; but in the East they seemed to have retained the features of the private bath, while in the West and in the Roman Hauran in Syria they exhibit a strongly marked uniformity of pattern that seems derived from the public Thermae.

This conjecture is borne out by the numerous traditions which tell of baths being converted into baptisteries, while a glance at the still remaining *frigidarium* in the Stabian baths at Pompeii is sufficient to show after what pattern the western type was modelled. The shape is just that of the circular baptistery with its four small apses, while the basin itself of white marble is of similar proportions to many of the fonts we have considered. It is 13 ft. 8 in. in diameter, and about 3 ft. 9 in. deep. It is entered by two marble steps, and has a seat running round it at a height of 10 in. from the bottom. It was clearly therefore never more than half full, as no one would sit on a seat more than a few inches under the water[1].

[1] Cf. Cyprian, Ep. 76, referred to above, p. 312.—*Concise Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, Murray, London, 1898, art. 'Baths,' p. 106.

Depth of Fonts.

The depth can be ascertained with certainty in the cases where the original drain-holes remain, and can usually be calculated approximately from the steps leading down to the water, which are almost invariably two in number.

The normal depth is under 3 ft., so that unless the font were filled to the brim, the average depth of water would have been about 2 ft.; in some cases 15 in. represents the utmost capacity of the basin (Amwas, Beit 'Aûwa). In many cases, where the font has disappeared, we are justified in assuming a similar measurement, as its proportion to the size of the baptistery does not vary much in the West.

Steps.

Much misunderstanding has arisen from the supposition that it was usual to descend into the water by seven steps. The number found is almost invariably two, and where three are spoken of it will generally be found that the rim of the font has been counted as the third, and that the font is constructed with three concentric rings.

The seven steps therefore referred to in literature are made up by counting the paces of the catechumen, the first being when he puts his foot on the edge to step in, the next two as he descends the two inner rings of the font, the fourth as he stands on the floor of the basin, and the remaining three as he goes up out of the water.

Cf. Isidore of Seville (633), *de Divin. Offic.* II. ch. 25 'Fons autem omnium gratiarum origo est, cuius septem gradus sunt; tres in descensu propter tria quibus renuntiamus, tres in ascensu propter tria quae confitemur, septimus vero is est, qui et quartus similis Filio hominis extinguens fornacem ignis, stabilimentum pedum fundamentum aquae in quo omnis plenitudo divinitatis habitabat corporaliter.' This passage seems to have been misunderstood by R. von Eitelberger in the quotation given above in his description of the font at Cividale.

It might seem at first sight as if a depth of 2 or 3 ft. were sufficient to allow the whole body to be covered, but a little consideration will show that it would be impossible in a font only 3 ft. across. Even in the wider type of basin that was common in the West it would be extremely awkward and practically impossible, as any one will realize who has ever tried to dip himself in the shallow end of an ordinary swimming bath. The only example of those we have considered in which such a proceeding would have been possible is perhaps that of the Lateran, where the rite was administered by the Popes. When baptism is administered by total immersion in modern times, it is found necessary to have a tank in which the candidate can stand with the water up to his neck or breast; or if the water is shallower the font must be at least 8 ft. long, and the administrator has to enter the water and lay the candidate on his back. In the early Church, as we have seen, the bishop made use of a desk which raised him well out of reach of the surface of the water.

Curtains.

The pillars in the Lateran baptistery are supposed to have been hung with curtains. From early times the Church had objected to men and women bathing together (*Const. Apost.* 1, 9; Cypr. *de hab. virg.* 19), and the presence of deaconesses would seem to imply that in the preparation for baptism the sexes were kept apart, even if the rite was administered to both at the same time (*Can. Hipp.* § 114; *Const. Apost.* 3, 15).

Augustine (*de Civ. Dei* xxii. 8) mentions a miracle which came to his knowledge as having taken place in the women's quarter of the baptistery at Carthage (*in parte feminarum observanti ad baptisterium*), which may refer to a separate font or simply to a robing-room, such as are frequently found adjoining the ancient baptisteries. There are said to have been two separate buildings at Autun.

At the same time no special precautions seem to have been taken to screen the candidates, who were made to take off

everything, even jewelry and false hair (*Can. Hipp.* § 115). Chrysostom speaks of catechumens as being 'as naked as Adam in Paradise' (*Hom.* 6 *in Coloss.*). Ambrose (*Serm.* 20) points out how absurd it is for a man who was born naked, and entered naked into the Church, to hope to carry his riches into heaven. Cyril (*Cat. Myst.* 2) reminds the newly baptized how they were naked in the sight of men and were not ashamed. Athanasius accused Arius of inciting Jews and heathens to break into the baptistery at Alexandria and insult the catechumens; while Peter of Apamea was accused of doing the same thing at Constantinople, and so frightening the women there assembled that they fled naked into the streets (Chryst. *Epist.* 1 *ad Innocent.*[1]).

In the western Church, however, the ring of pillars carrying a ciborium is a very common feature (as at Salona, Tebessa, Cividale, and Aquileia), and these were probably used in later times to secure the privacy that was not thought necessary in earlier ages. The curtain mentioned in the description of the church in the 'Testament of our Lord' seems to have hung before the door and not round the font ('Similiter domus baptismi sit velo obtecta,' p. 325).

It is related of Otto of Bamberg that on converting the Pomeranians (1124), he had three baptisteries constructed, one for boys, one for women and one for men. He had three large basins sunk in the ground so that they reached as high as a man's knee, and round them he had curtains hung on cords tied to a circle of supports. The catechumens went inside with their godparents, and there gave up their clothes to them, and the priest standing outside the curtains, when he heard the candidate enter the water, drew aside the curtain enough to allow him to pour water thrice over his head. We have here an interesting survival of the ancient custom at a time when infant baptism must have been the rule, and when fonts were of the type with which we are familiar to-day, being usually raised on pedestals to facilitate the dipping which, we saw,

[1] Bingham, bk. xi. ch. 11 sections 1–3.

had by this time come to be considered the more perfect way [1].

> Cortinas circa dolia, fixis columnellis funibusque inductis, oppandi fecit, ut in modum coronae velo undique cuppa cingeretur, ante sacerdotem vero et comministros, qui ex una parte astantes Sacramenti opus explere habebant, linteum fune traiectum pependit. . . Sacerdos vero qui ad cuppam stabat, cum audisset potius quam vidisset quod aliquis esset in aqua, velo paululum remoto, trina immersione capitis illius mysterium Sacramenti perfecit.

Persistency of type.

The Western type of font that was established by the fourth century lasts with singular persistency late into the Middle Ages; just as the traditional method of picturing the baptism of our Lord underwent comparatively little modification in the course of centuries. Fonts of the early Christian form are found at Torcello (ninth to eleventh centuries), Florence (eleventh to twelfth), Cremona (twelfth), Pisa (1153), Parma (1196), while baptisteries from which the original basins have disappeared are numerous. This conservatism in later ages would seem to argue against any sudden change having been made at the time of the peace of the Church.

Again, our examples have been taken from the catacombs of Rome and Alexandria, from Palestine, Tyre, Egypt, the Hauran, Asia Minor, Persia, Byzantium, Dalmatia, Rome of the fourth century, Naples, Africa, Lusitania, the Lombard and Merovingian kingdoms, and the Frankish Empire. In none of these cases would submersion be easy or natural; in most cases it would be impossible. Such a remarkable unanimity, in spite of differences in details, points back to a much earlier original type of basin which certainly would not have been large; and if we are right in holding that the private bath in domestic use was the model which first suggested the form and shape of the later structures, we may

[1] *Acta Bolland.*, July 28, p. 395.

confidently assert that baptism by submersion would have been as difficult to carry out in them as it would have been in the catacombs.

Sources of the popular error.

Besides the misunderstanding as to the way in which the seven steps were reckoned, to which allusion has been made above, three other sources of popular error may be mentioned.

It might be argued that the custom of consecrating the water excludes the method of administration by bringing the head of the catechumen under a stream descending from a spout, which we saw reason to believe was sometimes adopted. But it must be remembered that the idea that any change in the water itself was brought about by benediction is of comparatively late origin. It was rather the consecration of the ELEMENT of water that was considered to have been effected by the baptism of Christ in the running stream of Jordan[1].

The analogy between baptism and death, dwelt on by S. Paul in the epistle to the Romans (vi. 4), has often been quoted as involving submersion, and numerous passages in the Fathers have seemed to support the belief that the catechumen must necessarily have been entirely covered by the water. Thus Cyril of Jerusalem, when he compares the threefold immersion with the three days and nights of our Lord's entombment, and reminds his hearers that in their baptism they saw nothing 'as if it were night,' uses language which seems to imply total immersion.

Cat. Myst. XX. 4 οὕτω καὶ ὑμεῖς ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ ἀναδύσει τὴν πρώτην ἐμιμεῖσθε τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ γῇ ἡμέραν καὶ τῇ καταδύσει τὴν νύκτα. Ὥσπερ γὰρ ὁ ἐν νυκτὶ οὐκέτι βλέπει, ὁ δὲ ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐν φωτὶ διάγει, οὕτως ἐν τῇ καταδύσει, ὡς ἐν νυκτί, οὐδὲν ἑωρᾶτε, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀναδύσει πάλιν, ὡς ἐν ἡμέρᾳ ἐντυγχάνετε ὄντες.

This is of course involved in our modern customs of burial, where earth is piled on the coffin; but it may be questioned

[1] Stone, D., *Holy Baptism*, ch. I, note 13, p. 221.

whether such an idea was present either to the mind of the Apostle, who was thinking of the burial of our Lord where the body was simply laid in the tomb, or to the writers of the early Church, whose customs of burial involved no more than laying the corpse in a sarcophagus or carrying it down to the catacombs. It is in the structure of the font rather than in the water that they find their analogy, in the act of going down rather than in what they found when they descended.

Cat. Myst. iii. 12 *τρόπον τινὰ ἐν τοῖς ὕδασι ταφείς, ὥσπερ ἐκεῖνος ἐν τῇ πέτρᾳ*—and xx. 4, where the catechumens are reminded how they were led to the *κολυμβήθρα ὡς ὁ Χριστὸς ἀπὸ τοῦ σταυροῦ ἐπὶ τὸ προκείμενον μνῆμα*. Cf. Bingham, bk. xi. ch. 11, sections 4–7.

Even where the custom of earth-burial obtained, to cast a handful over the corpse was considered sufficient to constitute an interment. It was in this way that Antigone disobeyed the command of Creon that her brother's body was to remain without the honour of burial:—

τὸν νεκρόν τις ἀρτίως
θάψας βέβηκε κἀπὶ χρωτὶ διψίαν
κόνιν παλύνας κἀφαγιστεύσας ἃ χρή[1].

See the passages quoted by R. C. Jebb in his edition of Sophocles (Cambridge 1883), describing the guilt incurred by any one who passed by an unburied corpse without throwing earth on it.

The words used to describe the administration of the sacrament (*βαπτίζω*, *λουτρόν*, *καταδύω*, *mergo*, *immersio*, *tingo*) are usually assumed to imply submersion. Even if this were involved in their original meaning, the same expressions might well be used if the rite were carried out in the way described above. Similarly the colloquial English word 'to duck' means strictly to dive, or push under the water, but in common use it is applied to any serious wetting,

[1] Soph. *Ant.* 245; cf. Hor. *Carm.* i. 28. 23–25:—
At tu, nauta, vagae ne parce malignus arenae
Ossibus et capiti inhumato
Particulam dare.

and even to a simple lowering of the head, where there is no question of water at all.

As a matter of fact, we have seen that whatever may have been the theories of ecclesiastical writers on the subject, the evidence from archaeology shows that they had little or no influence on popular practice for at least 700 years, and it is only when in the West Latin ceased to be the language in which people habitually thought, and when in the East the growing rarity of adult baptism made the Greek word patient of an interpretation that suited that of infants only, that the more literal meaning of the term began to be enforced.

> Cf. Duchesne, *Églises Séparées*, Paris, 1896, p. 95. En somme, il y a ici une erreur d'interprétation. L'immersion dont parlent les anciens textes n'est pas autre chose que l'affusion actuelle, pratiquée sans doute avec plus d'abondance, mais sans différence essentielle. Et cette manière de voir trouve une confirmation dans l'emploi des mots *tinctio*, *tingere*, pour désigner le baptême. Ce synonyme est dans la langue ecclésiastique latine depuis le temps de Tertullien. Or, que signifie *tingere*? Tout simplement mouiller et non pas immerger.

It would be an ungracious task to trace how persistently the greater number of archaeologists have repeated the statement that baptism by immersion (i. e. SUBmersion) was the universal custom in primitive times, and to point out how consequently they have been misled in judgement; but we may hope that the study here undertaken may at least have done something to remove this cause of confusion, and settled one small point among the many questions that make the study of Christian antiquities one of such great difficulty.

NOTE

THE list of fonts in Italy (pp. 336–340, 345–348) might easily have been extended. A list of 59 baptisteries, dating from the 4th to the 11th centuries, is given in Lopez, *Il battistero di Parma*, 1864, pp. 249 ff. Some dozen of these are mentioned as still possessing their original fonts, which are described as entered by two or three steps and hexagonal (Pesaro, 4th cent., Trieste, 6th cent., Pola in Istria, ? 9th cent.), octagonal (Barzano, Galliano, 6th–7th cent.), square (Murano, Torcello, 11th cent.), or 'like the ancient baths' (Cittanova); but no exact measurements are given, except in the case of an early Lombard basin at Castrocaro near Forlì, which is rectangular, 1·40 m. by 60 m. and 53 m. deep. In R. Cattaneo, *Architettura in Italia*, a small 7th or 8th century font in the museum at Venice is described and pictured (p. 101, fig. 44), and the remains of an earlier one at Torcello are mentioned in Venturi, *Storia dell' arte italiana*, vol. ii, Milan, 1902, p. 158.

It would have been easy also to multiply examples of representations of the rite from the 8th–10th centuries. A Carolingian ivory in the Museo Nazionale at Florence represents the baptism of Cornelius (H. Graeven, *Frühchristliche u. mittelalt. Elfenbeinwerke*, 1900, n. 29). The chapel of the Virgin erected at the Vatican by John VII in 706 has been destroyed, but sketches of the mosaics have been preserved, among which occurs a scene of the baptism of Christ (Garr. 279, 1, and 280, 4); and in the copy of the homilies of S. Gregory Nazianzen in the Bibliothèque Nationale at Paris (MS. Grec. 510, fol. 426), which was written for Basil the Macedonian in 886, is a page containing twelve small pictures of the Apostles, each baptizing a catechumen, who stands immersed up to the breast in a round, square, or cruciform font.

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